Archival Issues

Special 25th Anniversary Double Issue

Journal of the

Midwest Archives Conference

Volume 25, Numbers 1 and 2, 2000

CONTENTS

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Four of the best articles from our first 25 years and, of course, current Publication Reviews

MAC
Midwest Archives Conference

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FOUR OF THE BEST FROM OUR FIRST 25 YEARS

PUBLICATION REVIEWS

EDITORIAL POLICY

Archival Issues, a semiannual journal published by the Midwest Archives Conference since 1975, is concerned with the issues and problems confronting the contemporary archivist. The Editorial Board welcomes submissions relating to current archival practice and theory, to archival history, and to aspects of related professions of interest to archivists (such as records management and conservation management). We encourage diversity among topics and points of view. We will consider for publication submissions of a wide range of materials, including research articles, case studies, review essays, proceedings of seminars, and opinion pieces.

Manuscripts are blind reviewed by the Editorial Board; its decisions concerning submissions are final. Decisions on manuscripts will generally be made within 10 weeks of submission, and will include a summary of reviewers' comments. The Editorial Board uses the current edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* as the standard for style, including endnote format.

Please send manuscripts (and inquiries) to Board Chair Mark Greene. Submissions are accepted as hard copy (double spaced, including endnotes; 1-inch margins; 10-point or larger type), or electronically (Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or .rtf files) via 3 ½" diskette or as an E-mail attachment.

Publication Reviews

Archival Issues reviews books, proceedings, Web publications, and other materials of direct relevance or interest to archival practitioners. Publishers should send review copies to Publication Reviews Editor Kevin Proffitt. Please direct suggestions for books, proceedings, Web publications, and other materials for review, and offers to review publications, to the Publication Reviews Editor.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions to *Archival Issues* are a part of membership in the Midwest Archives Conference; there is no separate subscription-only rate. Membership, which also includes four issues of *MAC Newsletter* and reduced registration fees for MAC's two yearly meetings, are $30 per year for individuals and $60 per year for institutions. Members outside of North America may elect to have the journal and newsletter mailed first class rather than bulk mail, at additional cost.

Single issues of the journal are available at $15, plus $1 shipping and handling.

Please direct inquiries regarding membership and purchase of journal copies to MAC Secretary Menzi Behrnd-Klodt, Klodt and Associates, 7422 Longmeadow Road, Madison, WI 53717. Phone: 608-827-5727; E-mail: menzi.behrnd-klodt@pleasantco.com.

Advertising

Display advertisements in black ink are accepted at the following rates: full page, $250; ½ page, $150; ¼ page, $75; 1/8 page, $50. These rates are discounted 20 percent for a one-volume (two-issue) commitment. Ads supplied as E-mail or on disk are preferred; camera-ready black and white acceptable. No bleed pages.

Archival Issues is pleased to consider exchange ads with other archival publications and with publications of other organizations that may be of interest to our readers.

Awards

Margaret Cross Norton Award

A panel of three archivists independent of the journal's Editorial Board presents the Margaret Cross Norton Award in odd-numbered years (alternating with the New Author Award). The Norton Award recognizes the author of what is judged to be the best article in the previous two years of *Archival Issues*. The award was established in 1985 to honor Margaret Cross Norton, a legendary pioneer in the American archival profession and the first state archivist of Illinois. The award consists of a certificate and $250.

Cowinners were selected for volumes 23 and 24. Francis Blouin was recognized for his article "Archivists, Mediation, and Constructs of Social Memory," 24:2, 101–112. Blouin's thoughtful and intellectually engaging article states that the role of archives in the formation of social memory is an area of study with wider practical reaches than that of a purely academic exercise. Blouin's article suggests that the study of archives and the representations of history within them bring the question of the integrity of archives to the forefront. The idea that archivists may play more than a completely objective role in the formation of the historical record strikes directly at the core of our theories and practices of archival appraisal and accountability. By opening this discussion, Blouin opens the possibility for archivists in collections of every size and specialization to carefully consider the larger issues implicit in each collection-related decision that we make.

The other winner of the Margaret Cross Norton Award is Philip C. Bantin for his article "Strategies for Managing Electronic Records: A New Archival Paradigm? An Affirmation of Our Archival Traditions?" 23:1, 17–34. Our colleagues who develop theoretical solutions for profound problems that face us in fulfilling our professional mandates often challenge us to rethink previously held convictions or develop practical solutions. In recent years, nowhere has this been more apparent than the complex issues facing electronic records. For many in our profession, the very subject "electronic records" seems to be a Promethean task introduced by cruel gods to haunt our dreams and impede our progress. Rarely are archivists presented with such a clear synopsis of the theoretical framework, an analysis of the crucial issues, and a series of practical suggestions as in Phil Bantin's article.

New Author Award

A panel of three archivists independent of the journal's Editorial Board presents the New Author award in even-numbered years (alternating with the Margaret Cross Norton Award) for articles appearing in a two-year (four-issue) cycle of the journal. The award was instituted in 1993 to recognize superior writing by previously unpublished archivists, and may be awarded to practicing archivists who have not had article-length writings published in professional journals or to students in an archival education program. Up to two awards may be presented in a single cycle. The award consists of a certificate and $250.

For volumes 23 and 24, the New Author Award winner was Mark Shelstad for his article, "Switching the Vacuum into Reverse: A Case Study of Retrospective Conversion As Collection Management," 23:2, 135–153. The article discusses in detail the situation at the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming as it undertook the retrospective conversion of the collections finding aids to electronic format. The project, as is typical of such endeavors, became more than retrospective conversion: it became a massive reappraisal, documentation, and deaccessioning project. The article includes extensive tables on the time required to revise a collection as well as a detailed discussion of the methodology used. It is a well-written and well-documented article on potential problems almost any repository might face when doing retrospective conversion and how one institution responded to these challenges.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

A Few Words from the Editorial Board on This Special Issue

Welcome to the Special 25th Anniversary Double Issue of *Archival Issues*, which began life in 1976 as *Midwestern Archivist*. On behalf of the Editorial Board, I am pleased to present in this volume a mix of old and new, a celebration of our past and present.

Because our journal has never devoted space to editorial musings, I will give little space here to ruminations about the evolution of our publication. Besides, I could not hope to do better than then Editorial Board Chair Joel Wurl, in "*Archival Issues*: past, present and future," *American Archivist* 57 (spring 1994): 304–308. In that article, Joel summarizes the history and character of *Archival Issues*. The only significant change since that piece has been a conscious effort to broaden the geographic representation of the Editorial Board to more accurately reflect that, while the journal is published by the Midwest Archives Conference, it represents the research, practice, and opinions of archivists across the nation (and, yes, Canada, too—even Australia).

The first four articles in this volume were not specially selected to represent our twenty-fifth year; as is true for all of our numbers in recent memory, we publish articles in the order in which they complete the editorial process. And I hope we can be excused for believing that our "regular" articles are good enough for a special issue. (In any event, as a Midwestern-born journal, "good enough" is about as much as we are allowed to brag about anything.) These articles represent a traditional *Archival Issues* mix of the theoretical and practical, from archivists across the country and—not a tradition, exactly, but not too unusual, either, for us—from someone looking at our profession from the outside.

The final four articles in the volume were selected specifically to represent some of the best of the journal's first 25 years. The Editorial Board looked for articles that stood up well over time—that, indeed, were as much worth reading now as they were when they were first published—and that also represented our tradition of diversity of topics and styles. The one other criterion was that the articles have not been reprinted previously. So, if your favorites aren't here, they may already be in *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice* or in *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice*. Of course, your favorites may also have been among the other articles we considered and/or among the dozen or more articles from the journal currently found on the reading lists of graduate archival education courses.

In the event, the four articles reprinted here were not revised, though clear typographical errors were corrected (we did not always have the services of a professional proofreader as we do now) and a very few explanatory comments have been inserted in brackets. We even included the original "About the Author" so that you can see who they were then and we added updates describing who they are now. We invited the authors to contribute new forewords to their articles, and three did so. We are particularly pleased to be able to bring these articles back for a curtain call, and proud that the journal has sustained such a high level of quality over its entire 25 years.

Finally, I hope you noticed that our cover has been revamped in recognition of MAC's new logo and the journal's anniversary. For that we thank Aleda Downs, our incomparable production editor, who has also helped us make the journal look as good as its content. And we also thank Darlene Brill, our tenacious proofreader, for ensuring that current issues have fewer errors and more stylistic consistency than our earlier ones. I would like to thank the current and all past Editorial Boards for being so willing and able to assist authors in polishing their drafts for publication (listed roughly in the order each first joined the board):

J. Frank Cook
Nicholas Burckel
Kenneth Duckett
John Fleckner
Holly Hall
Timothy Walch
Charles Elston
Toby Fishbein Kemp
Warner Pflug
Patrick Quinn
Frank Mackaman
Karen Benedict
Timothy Ericson
Mary Janzen
Marion Matters
Gordon Hendrickson
Linda Evans
David Haury
Nancy Bartlett
Peter Gottlieb
Paul Eisloeffel
Saundra Taylor
Sheryl Williams
Kevin Proffitt
Steve Gietschier
Alexandra Gressitt
Rand Jimerson
Todd Daniels-Howell
Margery Sly

And I hope I will be permitted to single out the past Editorial Board Chairs for recognition:

Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, volumes 1–3

Lydia Lucas, volumes 4–5

Anne Diffendal, volumes 6–7

Dave Klaassen, volumes 8–10

Anne Kenne, volumes 11–12:1

Nancy Lankford, volumes 12:2–14:1

Frank Boles, volumes 14:2–16

Joel Wurl, volumes 17–18:1

Ann Bowers, volumes 18:2–19:1

Dennis Meissner, volumes 19:2–23

But most importantly, we all—current and past Editorial Boards alike—owe our deepest debt to the archivists and nonarchivists who were willing to take a chance and submit papers for publication, willing to put in that extra bit of work to revise articles to meet the Boards' standards. Without the authors there is no journal. And, of course, without readers there is no reason for a journal. It is to everyone and anyone who reads *Archival Issues* that we would like to dedicate this anniversary issue.

Mark A. Greene
Editorial Board Chair

RE-MEMBERING THE FUTURE: ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE ROLE OF THE ARCHIVIST[1]

BY CHAUNCEY BELL

Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness . . . .
Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to fulfill it.

—George Santayana, in *Life of Reason*, 1905–6

ABSTRACT: A nonarchivist, one with background as a computer systems designer and business management consultant, views the choices facing the archival profession in the computer age. Archivists are challenged to embrace change but to avoid the trap of believing that embracing technology per se is the correct transformation. Rather, it is archivists' skills as interpreters and communicators that are the foundation of our work. Our work is not, the article argues, founded in the ability to classify records or to design systems that store, locate, retrieve, and deliver records. Our critical skills lies, rather, in our ability to listen to the needs of our clients, to mediate between their needs and the resources available to us, and to help our clients navigate in the world they are making by categorizing and guiding them to records and distinctions that will make them better leaders.

My task is to discuss change. For nearly 20 years I have worked as a senior member of a team studying the ways that transformations come about in enterprises, articulating theory about how that occurs, and supporting large public and private organizations in making major changes in how they work and serve their clients. The theoretical foundations of our work, while rigorous and based in solid traditions, are nevertheless novel and have only rarely appeared in any but the most specialized literature. The background from which I write is, itself, a change from the traditions in which people talk about change. The current popular discourses of change in organizations are built in several traditions of management practice, systems theory, and psychology. The view of change I will present in this article is built from different traditions: biology, philosophy, and computer science.[2]

If you try to monitor your own reactions to this article as you read it, you can notice here, in a kind of live demonstration, some of the more important characteristics of change. It always comes with new language. The newness and new language trigger emotions: "This doesn't belong to me"; "It is foreign"; "I don't belong to it"; "It could be dangerous." When we first encounter a domain of changes, parts are unclear. If we are wise, we will pay close attention to those parts. All of us suffer from the habit of listening only to what we already understand. What is new makes people in the West uncomfortable, even anxious, because it is warning us that the world in which we have learned to navigate and cope is changing, and we will not be as competent (or as powerful) as we have been if we don't learn new ways of navigating and coping.

I have spent some 30 years helping organizations change to stay relevant and competitive in their fields. A little over a year ago I began to pay close attention to the field in which you work. The changes I will focus on in this article are *your* changes, and they are going to affect your role as archival professionals and you, personally. The changes coming—I believe that what you have seen so far is but the tip of the iceberg—are going to victimize you unless you develop your professional competence to help shape those changes. There will be no way for you to stand on the sidelines for this dance. One of the things I saw almost immediately is the way that computers are pressing in on your role. It appears to many people both inside and outside your profession that you are on a collision course with one of the great forces in the world today: that many of your roles and functions are slated for replacement by computers and software, and that soon you will be good candidates for downsizing. Neither of these outcomes is inevitable, but you do have formidable opponents.

One opponent is the shallow common sense of our time about what you do, and another is the enormous resources of the information industry that claims that it can handle "all the data" more efficiently. You must become active in the struggle to define the language and distinctions that set the story line—the identities and standards in which we interpret the value of what you do. Archivists are competing with the computer industry to define the stories that determine how money, prestige, and the power to act are going to be allocated to your discipline. The computer industry is insisting that the key terms have to do with the capture, storage, transmission, and retrieval of data and information. The story that comes from those distinctions says that the essence of your work is the classifying, tagging, and storing of information for efficient, timely retrieval.

In fact, from reviewing some of your literature, and from what I see happening in many other fields today as well, I believe you have begun to think of yourselves in terms of the machinery you use, as storage and retrieval machines, instead of designing your practices and machinery from a rich historical interpretation of your work. For example, take a look at this definition from RMS, the Records Management Society:

> All organisations use information. Information is an asset, a valuable resource, if it is available at the right time, in the right place, at the lowest cost. Records management is the systematic control, organisation, access to and protection of an organisation's information, whether it be on tape, disk, paper or film, from its creation, through its use, to its permanent retention or legal destruction.[3]

The proposition that information is an asset looks absolutely sound, but in fact is the opposite. The great unanswered question of information technology is, "What's the value here?" More seriously, this is a job description for a computer program, not for a person. Accepting the RMS definition, or one like it, joins you with the great mass of people today who have surrendered to the temptation of thinking of themselves as so-called information workers, thinking of themselves as people who "process information" for a living.[4]

In a world conceived as being constituted of bits of data, the computer does, in fact, offer awesome possibilities for storage and retrieval. And if that were to become the substance of the winning story about your work, then it would spell an end to the future of your discipline as you know it. A profession with some similarities to yours is that of pharmacists. On the one hand, recent surveys still put theirs as one of the most trusted professions in the country. On the other, their profession is evolving largely in the interpretation that the most important thing they do is put the right pills into the right bottles. The medical insurance industry wants to have less expensive people put cheaper pills into the bottles. Jerry Seinfeld did a skit about pharmacists recently. He asked, "Why do they have to stand two feet higher than us?" Then, assuming the voice of a pharmacist, he called out, "Get back, I need space here. I'm doing important things. I'm putting these pills into these bottles. If you'll just be patient, I'll have your prescription filled in an hour or so." In that interpretation, soon many pharmacists are going to be replaced by "put the pills into the bottles" machines.

I have the impression that archivists are making a potentially serious mistake in how you, as a community, interpret what it is that you take care of. As a community, you may have "bought" the story that your job is fundamentally about the storage and retrieval of *things* and of *information.* You may have accepted the languages of industrial engineering and information sciences as the language for talking about your field.

The first challenge that I invite you to consider, then, is to construct another story, based in language other than that of the information industry. I don't believe that your essential role can be replaced by computers because, for example, inventing the future, listening to concerns, and making and fulfilling promises do not fall within the capabilities of computers. In the new story, the historical contributions that your discipline has made must take center stage away from the notions of storing and retrieving information. Your new story must take account of the historical role your discipline plays and has played in the making of history.

All of the branches of your work—administrative, legal, and societal archives—are today involved in what I am calling history making. The administrative records may look like they are being kept only for operational purposes, but I urge you to look again. The cycle of history may have been 50 years in Queen Victoria's time, and 10 years in Kennedy's time. Today the cycle of reinvention is shorter. Our present institutions of health and welfare, for example, are not recognizable from 10 years ago, and the "operational" records are where responsible managers need to go today to observe how next year's and next month's history will be built. Those archives that you speak about as being kept only because they are required by law are in fact required because of questions of trust, oversight, and other concerns that those laws were attempting to take care of. If the concerns embedded in the laws are still valid, then managers are con-

cerned with them in the present; if not, then the laws and their effects are social waste that can be brought to the attention of lawmakers.

Your job is not about storing and sorting information. It is about appraising and keeping records of history-making events and the acts spoken by history makers, and doing that in a way that allows you to be effective partners for those history makers in their remembering of the past. Such a story will make clear that your job is not to compete with computers, software, and emerging computer networks in the categorization, storage, and retrieval of data. Santayana did not say that those who could not retrieve the information were condemned to be unhappy or to produce more of the same information. He said that those who could not re-member—i.e., assemble an effective interpretation of the past—would repeat that past.

Changes All Around

We are surrounded by and enmeshed in changes today in many domains of our lives. We are beset by changes in our workplaces, in how employers interact with employees, in the tools we use, and in the way we talk to each other. One important feature of many of these changes is the way that networks and computers figure in emerging new ways of being and working. Computers and networks increasingly mediate our interactions with each other and our environment. They are emerging as the eventual dominant medium for commerce and the invention of identities. It is clear that they will shortly surpass television in that regard.

Now, my interpretation is that in some domains of life we in the United States don't fully experience our own relationship to change. True, for some changes, we are old hands, comfortable, sometimes amused, occasionally willing to expose our awe even if we do think that awe is childish. In the world of our work today, where changes in relationships, computers, and networks are dancing together so powerfully, too often we are still raw, frightened immigrants, living in the interpretation that we are not going to succeed with all this new "stuff." To make matters worse, we often attempt to appear as if we are competent and know what we are doing when we are, in fact, ignorant. Too often we allow ourselves to remain confused, cynical, and overwhelmed or cowed by the continuous newness that surrounds us. We fail to notice that our trepidation, resistance, or resentment is the result of our attempt to enter a new era with the emotions and skills of an old one.

It matters how we are predisposed to change, and how we choose to orient ourselves to change. Our emotional predisposition comes first—our bodies making an interpretation about the future that is coming to us—and that predisposition shapes the way that we listen to what is coming and get ready to participate in the emerging world. Some emotional predispositions are helpful. Awe, curiosity, playfulness, and openness, for example, prepare us to listen well to emerging possibilities and changes. Other predispositions block our capacity to listen, think, and participate. For example, resignation, resentment, despair, and cynicism slow or stop our listening to the concerns of others and to the opening of new opportunities and possibilities in front of us.

What is Changing and What is Stable?

If you listen to Tom Peters, he will tell you that *everything* is changing and that, as a consequence, we have entered a chaotic, hit-or-miss world.[5] Although I can see why he thinks that, I heartily disagree. What appears to be changing depends upon where you stand to look (consider the weather). In the recent past we have changed how we produce local records of language from typewriters to word processors to networked word processors. The range of these transformations has been quite broad; for example, with a word processor at a certain point we find ourselves not only "writing" but also preparing our document with special typefaces in ways that used to be the exclusive domain of typesetters. More recently, we hear that newspaper, magazine, and book publishing, as well as television and advertising, are being transformed or damaged by what is happening with the Internet.

I want to present some distinctions for thinking about what is stable in the midst of this whirlwind of changes.

1. Concerns for taking care of the future are at the center.
2. How action happens is stable, and it does not happen from information.
3. Trust and mistrust are foundational, and they are not changing.

For several thousand years people have made marks on fixed and transportable media to record commitments between people, draw maps, create art, and otherwise make inscriptions to support their conversations. The essential practices of making inscriptions have stood without major change—until we started using computers and networks—since the time when Egyptians, Chinese, Aztecs, and others first made notations on stone, clay, or paper about the declarations of kings and the members of their courts; about conquests, defeats, and accomplishments; and about promises made and fulfilled in the midst of exchanges. We tell stories and report events and facts about who we are, where we have been, and where we are going and as we do that—or immediately after—we inscribe the speaking. Modern societies are built on top of such practices for making inscriptions. We do not have the capacity to build adaptive, trusting communities of action without inscriptions.

In response to the new opportunities for communication that the computer and network technologies are opening up, people are inventing new ways of taking care of old concerns and inventing new concerns. The computers and networks offer a new kind of capacity to speak, listen, read and write, comment, request, purchase, promise, and at the same time to automatically make inscriptions recording any act of speaking that happens across the network. These new infrastructures for communication are giving us the capacity to generate coordination tools like ATMs, cellular telephones, fax and interactive television, computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing, and the scanners at supermarket checkout counters. Altogether new kinds of offers and coordination are appearing. Credit cards and credit card readers register identities and promises in worldwide networks that allow banks and airlines, for example, to shape offers in which fliers get commercial and personal services at the same time (frequent flyer programs). As a consequence of their participation in these networks, banks and airlines are able to enter into new marketing relationships with their customers; the

infrastructure allows them to interact with their customers in much richer ways than were possible before.

Colleagues of mine estimate that the new generation of tools now coming available on the Internet has reduced the cost of building and deploying networked computer tools by a factor of 80. That kind of improvement produces an irresistible provocation or impetus to make changes in tools supporting important kinds of actions. Importantly for archivists and records administrators, these new tools have radically different kinds of capabilities for making and retrieving inscriptions than have the previous generations of tools.

There are a lot of changes. Yet, if we look from the right perspective, a great deal is also stable. Figure 1 begins to show where the world is more stable. Every organization constitutes itself with declarations about a regular set of structures. Managers continuously adjust the offers of the institution, and adjust the technologies it uses and its division of labor (roles and processes) to keep "tuned" to clients. Regardless of those changes, as the exhibit emphasizes, the fact of accountabilities to take care of client concerns does not change.

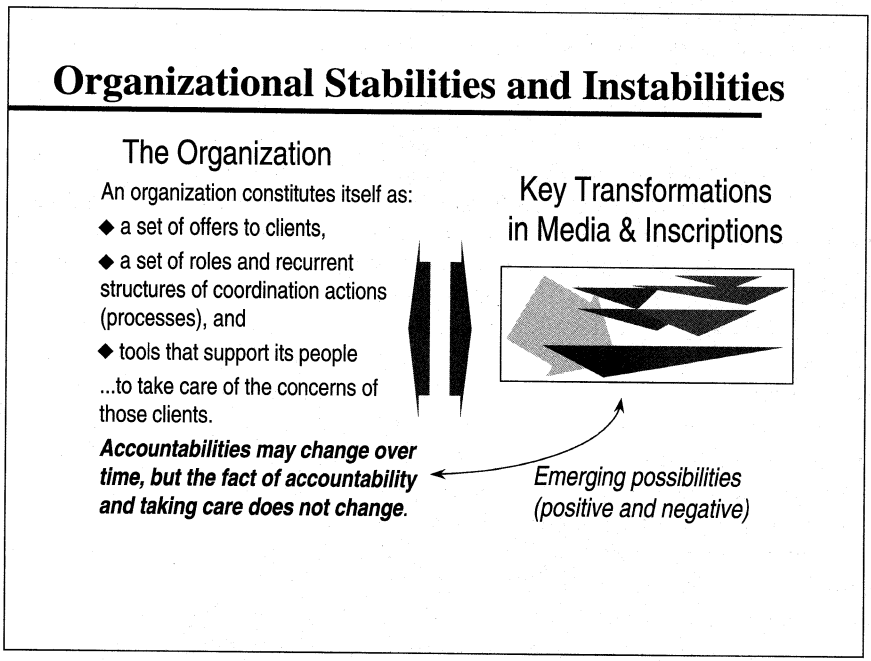

Figure 1

There are great underlying sources for this stability, shown on the left in Figure 2. Over the last years, the "information technology interpretation" of the role and responsibilities of archivists and records managers has dominated, and with that domination you have been drifting towards the interpretation that your essential role lives fully in the areas of changes. I insist that is a serious mistake. The core of your role needs to be understood in the stabilities.

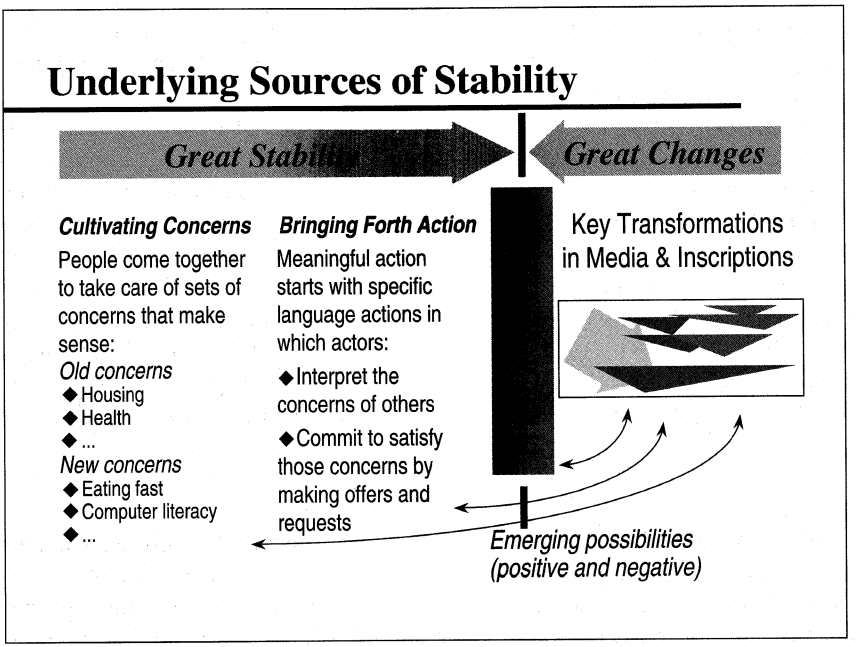

Figure 2

Santayana was right. To enter the future well, we must pay considerable attention to those aspects of life that are stable. At the same time we must be open to the possibility that some of our historical interpretations are invalid and we must declare, carefully, what we will carry with us from the past into the future.

Concerns at the Center

People gather in institutions and enterprises to take care of collections of concerns that make sense in their culture at a moment in time. Without the commitment to take care of concerns that matter to people, there is no meaningful action. Some of our concerns are permanent: food, shelter, clothing where it is cold, companionship, family, health, community, spirituality, and so forth. Others shift as we cultivate different ways of being. Today in the U.S. we are concerned about being able to eat fast, having our children literate with computers, being physically fit, and staying youthful. *Even when these concerns are shifting, which they do, they tend to shift relatively slowly. If we are watching, and listening to our clients, we can normally track their changes.*

Another stable feature of our institutions and enterprises is that people's emotional reactions to their worlds and the moods in which we find them are connected deeply to these concerns. For example, the moods and emotions of people being laid off from an institution in which they had understood they had permanent employment will show (or hide) certain indignation, outrage, or resentment from the betrayal. The listened-to promise of permanent employment, which had been taking care of the person's need to take care of family and future, was broken. When our concerns are taken care of, we are

more or less tranquil; when we take care of our own concerns we are proud. When our concerns are in danger, we are alert and in action or, if we think that nothing can be done, fearful, resigned and/or resentful.

In the world of inscriptions, listening to/for concerns is fundamental to the process of creation, appraisal, and management of records. The criteria for these actions are devised in the practice of listening. Information technology cannot replace this aspect of your work. Information technology can help you to listen better, because you can be available in more places, or more of the time, or more quickly, or can offer you better ways of connecting with others, but information technology cannot listen. It can record noises, but it cannot re-member the past or produce interpretations about its implications for the future. This is what you have been working to accomplish, and you are necessary. I urge you not to surrender your opportunity to define how all of us will interpret your discipline to the shallow stories offered by information technology.

How Action Happens

Often, the computer industry leads our culture in its tendency to confuse communication and information, as if they were the same things. This confusion has a lot to do with the confusion in your role. "You are hired" or "You are fired" is not information when it first appears, whether orally, on paper, or electronically. Each is an invention, brought forth in language, in which a new set of future possibilities appears. Communication and information are different phenomena. Information has to do with what is present and can be asserted. Communication has to do with our successful living together, through the intentional coordination of actions. We human beings bring action, and coordinate that action in language, more specifically in speech acts. We listen to each other's concerns, and we make requests and offers, promises and assessments, declarations and assertions. Not coincidentally, the earliest recorded work of archivists was concerned centrally with making and maintaining records of exactly these speech acts as they were made by royalty and the ruling and priestly classes.

It turns out that, when we turn our attention from the collection of symbols that are language to the *way that we do things with language,* there are only a few major classes of things that we do as we speak with each other, as illustrated in Figure 3.

The Grammar of Action

- With **declarations** we create new distinctions with which to take care of our concerns.
- With **offers** and **requests** we orchestrate new spaces in which we can take action, and we elicit mutual commitment and coordinated action.
- With **assessments** we take stock of our world, evaluate our progress, prepare ourselves for action, and navigate in our projects and worlds.
- With **assertions** we build confidence in our judgments, and consistent, reliable coordination.

Figure 3

We have all been doing these things since we were small children, despite the fact that we had poor distinctions for understanding what we were doing. For example, I have a 10-year-old daughter. She spent most of her first six years working on how to make effective requests. I can report that she has achieved a high level of competence. With some people, she gets almost everything for which she asks.[6]

Archivists are being seduced—in your behavior if not in your hearts—to the interpretation that the technologies of your work are at the center of your role. At the same time, you have relegated what you call the "content" of your work to, at best, a status equal to your technologies. I say this to be polite. I believe that in terms of your attention, you give less attention to the nature of the content of your work than to the nature of computer systems you will use to help you with that content. The structure of speech acts I am now introducing to you can help you bring the "content" of your work back to the center. It is in this structure of action in language that we human beings live together, bring about things that give meaning to life, produce historic events, and "make history."

Let me give you an example of the direct relevance of this interpretation to action in your field by looking at one of the great historical documents: our Declaration of Independence. Put in your mind's eye a recently naturalized mother, standing with her child in front of the declaration in its hermetically sealed case in Washington. She is weeping, filled with awe and gratitude at the new future that she and her child now have, brought about by the speaking of a group of people so long ago, and by the commitment of a nation of people over two centuries to keep the commitments of those original speakers alive and vigorous. The existence of the artifact is helpful to keeping that commitment alive and affords the moment of invention. The money and care with which the artifact has been kept are emblematic of the strength of the commitment of that nation of people to keep alive that original declaration. However, the artifact is only a token of what produced the action and of the source of the power involved: the speaking, the interpretation, and the commitment of those who have listened to the declaration over the years.

To produce Figure 4, I typed the Declaration of Independence on one page and then color coded its text in three component parts:

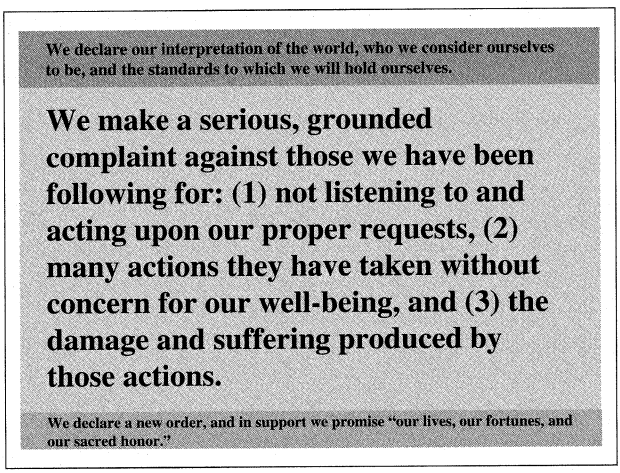

Figure 4

- In the grey section, our ancestors ***declared*** the set of interpretations and standards by which they would assess behaviors and situations.

- In the black section, they ***assessed*** behaviors of King George and Britain that were wholly inconsistent with the interpretations and standards in which they had committed to live, and ***asserted*** facts to back up those assessments.
- In the white section, they ***declared*** the program—the new order—and ***promised*** to bring that future, committing their lives, fortunes, and honor to the success of their program.

When I show this to commercial organizations in the process of shifting their direction and transforming themselves, one of the things I like to point out is that this extraordinarily powerful event, which we can see through this document, did not consist of an exercise of envisioning a new future, setting objectives, and producing a plan. Those activities can be useful components in an overall scheme of changes, but the place where human action comes from is deeper and simpler than that. We build our future in declarations, assessments, requests, and promises. This is where the content that matters comes from. This is obvious if we are looking with the right distinctions, and invisible if we are not.

If you go to the country's schools of management and ask how action happens in enterprises, you will get many different answers, but none of them will address directly the palpable truth of the matter that we human beings bring forth action in our speaking and listening together. Listening and speaking in ways that support the invention of new futures is creative and not mechanical work, and it is a stable competence that is going to be enriched, not replaced, by the emerging technologies.

Trust and Mistrust

We have entered an era in which every single inscription is potentially a fake. We can see all around us an epidemic of mistrust in government institutions. "Trust" is becoming a popular word, but if you listen carefully, people speaking about trust are speaking about a phenomenon that, while we can identify with its sentiment, is "soft," vague, and mental or psychological. While it is true that there are historical, cultural, and "purely" emotional aspects of trust, that is not where I want to start here. I invite you to notice another, more central and concrete dimension of trust. Trust is the assessment we make that someone is sincere and competent for taking care of some world of action.

Trust, understood in this way, can be built or rebuilt systematically. How? We gain trust when we assess that other people are listening well to our concerns, when they repeatedly demonstrate a competence to successfully address those concerns, and when they participate in articulating and creating a future in which we share. What we call "commitment processes" are successions of transactions among people in organizations in which requests and promises are articulated and fulfilled or not. It is in the "commitment processes" of an organization that trust is built or trust is lost. A person, a

group, an institution, or a work community builds an identity of trustworthiness over time. When identities change, suspicion and lessening of trust can also occur.

How is trust lost? Inevitably there occur breakdowns in human coordination, and with each breakdown a loss of trust is a possibility. Most obviously, you lose trust when someone fails to fulfill a promise. You lose trust when you interpret that someone is not listening well to your requests. You lose trust when you interpret that the other person is "going through the motions" of listening—responding only to your words, and not to the concerns that lie behind them.

Loss of trust works like an avalanche, building momentum with each successive loss. Mistrust is expensive. When we mistrust, we change suppliers, we follow up every promise in the expectation that it is not likely to be fulfilled, we do the work ourselves, or we do without it. Without trust, the capacity of a community to coordinate action, to make promises, and to build futures together breaks down.

Inscriptions play a fundamental role in the constitution of trust. We know that we cannot trust our memories for reliable reportage about what has been requested, promised, and fulfilled, what remains to be fulfilled, and what promises are pending. To trust a community of people to take care of concerns that matter to us, we must see that the community is competent in making and taking care of inscriptions. One of the main contributions of the archivist to the constitution of trust in the community is the way that, by judicious design and management of archives, the role of a fair and reliable witness is available in the community.

The phenomena of trust and mistrust are stable, as are the roles that they play in our ability to effectively coordinate action in every community. However, the size and number of communities with which we are interacting are growing, which daily gives us greater opportunities to form trusting and/or mistrusting relationships.

What Will Happen to Archivists and Records Administrators?

The past several hundred years have given us the industrial revolution, mass production, radical changes in transportation and communication around the world, the computer, software, and network industry, globalization, and downsizing. I am speculating here with you that in the era coming to us next we will see the Internet producing a vast transformation in the worlds of commerce and inscriptions, among other things. What is going to happen to the archival field, to its people and practices in the midst of these changes? What is going to happen to you?

You have arrived at a branch in the road (see Figure 5). The tradition in which your discipline has been moving has been recently shaped in powerful ways by the language and thinking of what I call "The Cartesian Information Clearing"—and has led to the interpretation that records professionals are paid for doing things that overlap with the jobs of computers. This is much deeper than a question of semantics. It is a question of interpretation, jobs, and livelihoods and, from my point of view, that means that members of your discipline should be well prepared to deal with this question.

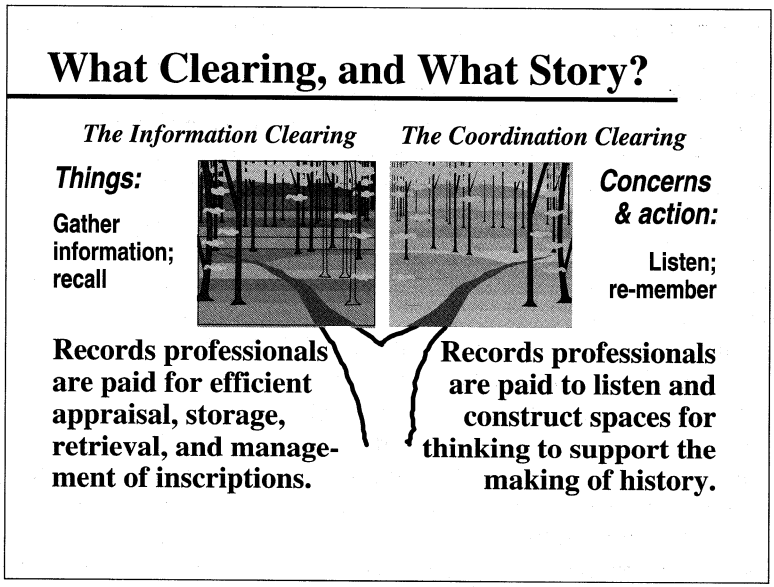

Figure 5

It is time for you to invent and tell a new story about yourselves, a story you can "sing around the fires" at night that tells of your past accomplishments and the future you are bringing. To be seductive, your story must show how you take care of things that matter to people. It must be a story in which you and your clients together can thrive, a story that builds your identity for the future. It must be a story that recognizes and utilizes change while building on what is stable and central to organizations and society.

To put it to you directly: You need to apply the best traditions of your work to preparing the space for interpreting where your discipline is headed, or else it is likely to end up where it *is* headed, and many or most of you *will* find yourselves replaced by computers. True, the computers will do certain important mechanical parts of your jobs with more speed and reliability (and fewer complaints) than you are able to do them now. On the other hand, the real center of your work could be damaged or lost for some period, and that would be a tragedy for all of us.

Once you produce a new interpretation and build a new story, then the job is to cultivate practices of living and working that give the people in your field the opportunity to invent meaningful lives for themselves. People who are in tune with the age in which they live and act do not resist or hold back change; they invite it, in the right moment, and shape how it appears.

Living with, adapting to, inviting, bringing, leading and/or resisting changes present a series of challenges. I have been suggesting directly and indirectly throughout this article that it is up to *you* to bring the future that is coming to you. If you want a prediction about the future, the smart money is on the information technology story about

your job: You capture, store, and retrieve information and for many of you, your jobs as you now understand them will shortly disappear. If you don't like that outcome, it is time to move into another path of action for the future in which you invent your own story. To invent that story, to make it stick, and to mobilize a set of communities around action to make that story the basis of a new and different future is what leadership and bringing and managing change are all about. From our work I offer you four recommendations.

1. **Become involved.** Competence in life, the capacity to do the right kinds of prioritization in modern life, to decline what we will not do, and serenity and satisfaction with life come from involvement in it. We involve ourselves in and make declarations about what we care about. Get involved in what you care about and become competent in taking care of what matters to you.[7]

2. **Appropriate a role that works and learn to thrive in it.** I suggest that you adopt and develop yourself in constructive roles that allow you to construct a meaningful life in the midst of whatever changes come. You may elect to lead, act as a responsible follower, or be a judicious observer. Successful leaders and followers learn to talk with each other, to seduce people into their stories, and develop competence at cultivating the kinds of emotions that are needed to move into a future different from the past we recently inhabited.[8] When changes come, if you have not chosen one of these roles, you will find yourself in the role of victim or excluded or cynical onlooker.

3. **Become competent to bring and coordinate action.** Archivists today lack a rigorous, grounded language for observing the way that action happens in human enterprises, even though it is certain that some of you have significant experience and competence in that regard. As a result of this lack, some in your profession are adopting the language of the computer and information industries. I am offering archivists a new interpretation about how action is brought, universally. People make requests and promises and constitute networks of commitment among themselves. That is where intentional, recurrent action always starts. I recommend that you go to work, and begin to reinterpret and rearticulate how action happens in your organizations and within your profession.

4. **Games and Scoreboards.** It is always easier to bring a change in practices if the process of getting there is structured as a set of games in which employees win when customers get taken care of. Also, scoreboards need to be constructed to show everyone how they are doing in the games.

In my experience there are two great impediments to successfully bringing a new practice to any organization, public or private, and to any profession.

1. **Misleading common sense about how change is brought in organizations.** Nearly everyone carries around in their background a strong, taken-for-granted interpretation about how people bring change. In Western countries today, most

of those interpretations are misleading or worse. People operating from these common senses often wait when they should get moving, misjudge resignation as opposition, and make other important mistakes. Let me give you a few examples.

- One of the most widespread notions is what I call **consensus**. The notion is that changes happen when a community comes to agreement that it will move in a particular direction and not before. This approach *never* works for bringing important changes. Whole communities, and even majorities, almost never agree to change direction in a unified way until everyone else in the world has already decided to go in that direction. In our fast-changing world, by the time the majority is headed in one direction, it is often the wrong direction.
- Another common notion is that the only way important changes happen is if the **people at the top** become convinced that certain actions must happen and, once they are convinced, they will give the right orders. Today, ironically, often the opposite is the case. Important changes come far more often from initiatives begun by people who are in direct daily contact with clients of the organization. If you ask most senior executives and managers, they will tell you how frustrated they are with their lack of capacity to bring effective changes.
- Another pernicious commonsense idea is that changes really come when **someone outside the organization** brings them. Ask around and see how effective most organizations feel their consultants have been in bringing effective change and you will see again that committed people inside the organization usually can lead more ably than can consultants. Further, no consultant will ever know your operations, your "business," or your clients the way you will.
- Another related and equally wrongheaded commonsene idea is that there are two jobs: coming up with **great ideas** and **implementing them**. In the first place, in any organization of any size at all you can find lots of people with great ideas about what is wrong and needs to be changed. They may not be speaking, or they may be resigned, but there is no lack of ideas. Great ideas are the ones that all but implement themselves, and they don't come from the heads of geniuses, but from the conversations of concerned people in the middle of the organization.
- The most widely read article on the subject of "reengineering," Michael Hammer's "Don't Automate, Obliterate" from *The Harvard Business Review*, sings the praises of two more false dreams: the **blank slate** and **benchmarking**.[9] The first notion, that for real change you first wipe the slate clean, is a long-disproven idea, although the words continue to come out of people's mouths every day. Even "Chainsaw Al Dunlap," the king of the downsizers, doesn't do that. An organization changes by evolving, adapting, shifting. It's like a garden: Even when you change all the plants and planting in it (its processes), you still have the same soil, weather, chemistry, and local animals (equivalent to its people, culture, traditions, habits, etc.). Benchmarking, the second notion, means that you compare your processes to those of other organizations. This can be a good way to wake up the people of an organization that has been completely asleep. It can be shocking to

discover that where it takes 28 days in your organization to resolve the loss of a document, archivists in Dallas do the same thing in four hours, and that shock may give you the provocation you need to spring into action. On the other hand, it might not. The first Americans to visit the Japanese auto manufacturing plants that had begun to operate without inventories came back wondering why the Japanese had gone to all the trouble of hiding all their inventories just to confuse their American visitors; everyone knew you couldn't run a plant without inventory.

2. **Rigid historical styles and persistent moods of resignation and resentment.** The second major impediment is the persistence of the kinds of moods and emotional constructions in which people cannot listen to the possibility of doing something new and then commit themselves to that. The people of a very large client of ours were convinced that they were big enough and diverse enough that everything worth thinking had been thought there. They did not notice that *how* you think something matters and how you *talk about it among yourselves and with others* also matters. They had developed a style of communication in which almost nothing new was ever done well enough to pass all the committees. Also, they had adopted a way of talking and listening to each other in which any show of emotion indicated a lack of proper reason. As a result, there was very little room in the company to show essential emotions: indignation about the mistreatment of customers, passion about something new that warrants fresh attention, or shame over broken promises.

On the other hand, I count four key elements for a successful implementation of a new practice:

1. **Listening.** The first ingredient is that some people in the organization must commit to developing a capacity to listen to the concerns of others sensitively and in a fresh way. Without that, no new possibilities really show up.

2. **Commitment (promises).** The critical ingredient is always a serious commitment by a few people who are convinced that by making some change they will be better able to take care of the concerns of others. Those few then show the opportunity to others. By some moment in the process before the change is complete, a critical mass of people in the organization—but never all the people and frequently not even a majority—have been convinced and commit themselves to support and bring about the change. The commitments in which an important change is brought have other important dimensions as well. The participants commit to grow leadership and leaders. They make serious promises among themselves to support each other in bringing these changes in a way that is analogous to the closing lines of the U.S. Declaration of Independence: Its signers wrote, ". . . we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."

3. **Emotions and Moods.** To lead successfully a process of designing and bringing a change to an organization you must learn to observe and help shape the moods and emotions that appear in the people. Emotions and moods are not details, but the background in which we encounter the world. Typically, the two biggest hurdles are anxiety and resignation. Every change that brings new practices is accompanied by anxiety. Anxiety is a necessary ingredient in any change. If no one is anxious, nothing is happening. On the other hand, people's first reaction to anxiety is usually to flee from anxiety back into old habits and patterns, so the anxiety must be anticipated and taken care of. Resignation is the assessment that nothing can be done to improve a situation. Governments and old institutions are full of it, like bacteria that live there permanently. It is possible to successfully intervene in resignation, but takes skill, determination, and experience. If you want to make a big change, you must overcome the interpretation that it is not possible to do anything new that is important.

4. **Learn to listen to anomalies and be astute about innovation.** My fourth recommendation is that you learn how to separate the wheat from the chaff—to discern the changes that are just beginning, or are about to begin, that spell new opportunities. Anomalies are the small, sometimes annoying and sometimes nearly invisible ways in which the future shows up in the present. Innovation is not about genius, but about listening well and having the right conversations about the cares of others. At the heart of the matter is again the critical competence of "concernful listening." Federal Express is a business built upon the recognition that no one was promising the delivery of the package. When the company started, airfreight companies engaged their customers in long conversations about the difficulties of being in the airfreight business. Federal Express stopped all that conversation and made a simple promise. "Your package will arrive tomorrow morning, period. How we do it is our problem. Anxious about where it is? OK, then call us and we'll tell you where it is." If we look carefully, Federal Express offers us a textbook example of inventing the future out of listening to everyday practices and concernful conversations with clients and technologists. After you take the promise seriously, everything else about Federal Express is simple. Try to understand the company from its routes and technologies and you will never get to the end.

Defining the Future

We cannot know exactly what your jobs will be like in 10 years. One thing is certain: Your job is not to be a more sophisticated computer, but to assist in coinventing the new world we are already entering. As you have seen happening in other disciplines and professions, some of your roles are going to change or even disappear, and the lines may blur between your roles and the roles of librarians, historians, and even information professionals and computer programmers. What can anchor you in the future is a strong sense of identity and purpose—what I have been calling a "story."

To have a powerful story, we must begin with the clear interpretation that the technology we are observing and the practices that it enters and transforms all serve stable, deep, and abiding human concerns. As we watch the tools we must keep our attention on those concerns and how the tools assist us in interpreting, taking care of, and even clarifying and evolving those concerns. To think well about the complex of changes and stabilities of which we are speaking, you need the proclivities of an amateur historian, which after all was another part of what our friend Santayana was urging upon us, was he not?

This moment is like the one in which we changed from seeing ourselves as planters of seeds and managers of animals to the moment in which we began to see ourselves as controllers of machinery and tools. What roles will be available to archivists and records administrators? The new technologies do much more than eliminate or reallocate much of the work we know. They change the space in which we make relationships with each other and bring new possibilities for action. We are in the midst of a change in our way of being. Most of today's managers and most of the current body of management practices and theory are at a loss to cope with multiple emerging worlds of relationships and action. They need your help. We are the kinds of animals who become what we are through the interpretations we build of ourselves—that's the secret center of your profession—and in computers and networks we have invented a new medium through which we will interpret ourselves.

In some parts of the world it is still possible to observe the old style of retail transactions: One person shows the product, a second writes up the order, and a third takes the money. That style is very old and its roots have to do with mistrust of people handling money and records. Handling the product, making the record, and handling the money are separated so that it is more difficult for theft and other mismanagement of product and money to occur. Today, when we are buying a product, especially with a credit card, that old style looks anachronistic. But go into almost any of your offices and you will encounter work structures essentially unchanged since medieval treasury officials invented them: waiting in lines and queues, threading through phone mazes to find responsible people, different paths for filling in different forms, and yet another line for paying fees. We haven't yet grasped how anachronistic these essentially feudal structures of organizing work are, invented in part to make the grandest county sheriff tremble in his boots. We still organize many of our great organizations, including government departments, universities, and libraries, in similar styles. The new generation of technologies will accelerate the rate at which these old styles are undermined, challenged, and transformed. With computer networks now encircling the globe, we have the possibility of an inscription—a record—that can receive instructions, consult its own clock and other references, and at a programmed time, speak to us in a way it has been instructed to speak.

We know a different future is inevitable. The central job of leaders is to invent the narratives and emotional structures that give shape to that future and allow the rest of us to participate in it. To produce the best future for you, you will need exceptional faculties for manipulating inscriptions and records *and* for collaborating with others to make history (see Figure 6). Important parts of your traditional work will be taken over reliably by computers and software and will disappear into the networks. Which parts will

be taken over? Computers and software will permanently take over those parts in which the work really can be reliably described by algorithms. Over the next decade or so we will see extensive automation in those parts of your work that are composed of mechanistic repetition of activities that do not require human listening, judgment, or commitment for their successful completion. For the parts of your work that have to do with manipulating inscriptions, a tremendous number of people are available and eager to help you develop those faculties. For the latter area, I suggest you apply your own discipline to the question and that you seek new help.

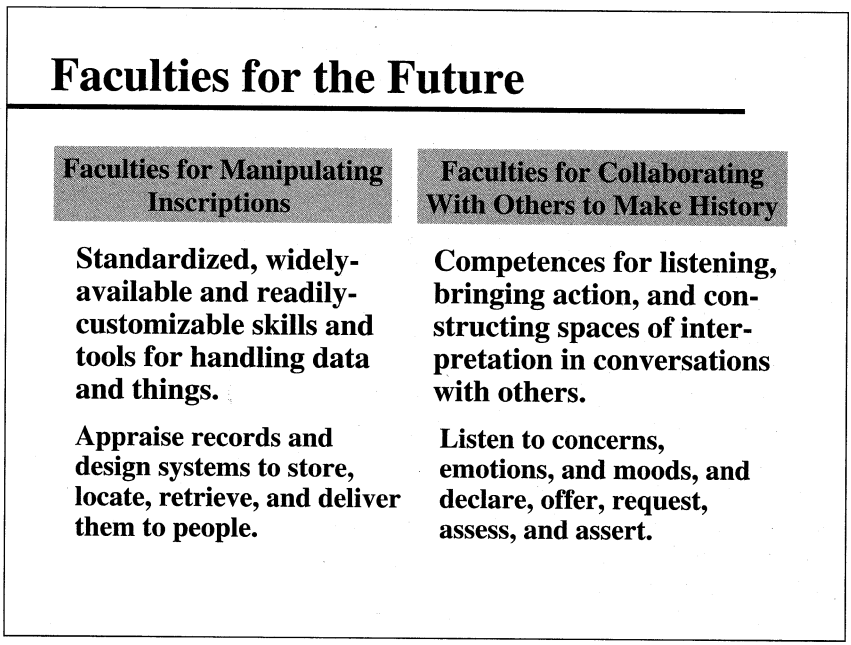

Figure 6

One of your key practices that computers can never do is to listen to the concerns of human beings. Computers can give you tools for listening better, but they cannot listen for you. Appraisal is the result of a careful, measured listening to the concerns embodied in content, context, and structure. This is where your criteria for classification, storage, preservation, and retrieval are developed, because listening for concerns is listening for relations; it is communication, not information. Concerns are not fixed facts; they shift and adjust, depending upon who is listening, when they listen, and what kind of world they listen in. The worlds we inhabit are ceaselessly changing and the work of listening is never complete. If you in your role as archivists and records managers were to assist in the development of a computer algorithm incorporating all of the sensibilities necessary for effective listening today (assuming such sensibilities could be incorporated into algorithms in the first place), you would find it necessary to repeat the work next year or even next week as the world of concerns and possibilities will have shifted. Listening is ongoing sensitivity, or attunement, to the world and the historical

identities and action that constitute and are constituted by it. In the process, you and I are coinventing our own future.

This listening is what you have done in the past; it has been at the core of all your practices, albeit often invisible to all but the most tenacious of observers. When many of the visible aspects of your practices have disappeared into networks, listening will remain. In remembering this (and other aspects as well), you re-member yourselves for the future that is coming. And you re-member more than only yourselves. By being archivists and records managers and thinking about your work in this way, you will help to re-mind the rest of us of the centrality of listening to concerns in the handling of inscriptions, in the turning of inscriptions into records, and of the importance of records to the making of history—ours.

I can say a few more things about the story you must invent:

- It must be connected to a careful interpretation about how people make history. You must pay a lot more attention to the question of your "content."
- You must give up the fiction that you are neutral, transparent instruments without opinions or interpretations as you do your work. Your work is all about interpretation and we depend upon you for your sensibility.
- You must stop hiding from and behind the historians, political actors, journalists, and others who depend upon your work and instead come forward as their partners in the exercise of articulating and grounding the stories upon which the rest of us will build our political agendas. I think that in these difficult times many of us shy away from the responsibility inherent in our actions. Children sometimes become paralyzed as they discover, growing up, that their actions really do matter. Originally, my wife was appalled when she first discovered that one of my blessings for my children was that they might have the opportunity to become politicians. *I consider that there is no higher calling in troubled times like ours than that of taking responsibility for articulating the public agenda and helping lead us into an uncertain future.*
- The activities of your discipline (like those of accounting and auditing, for example) have always been oriented to the past and that orients *you* to the past. For the challenge of reinventing your discipline, this is a serious weakness that you must overcome. You must be at least equally oriented to bringing a new and, until it arrives, unknowable future.
- In the future that I am painting for you, your old friends comfort and tranquillity have already betrayed you. In times of turbulent change, you cannot trust them to tell you when you are doing well. In fact, if they tell you that you are doing well, you are probably no longer relevant. Your new friend in this context is a new interpretation of the old nemesis *anxiety*. I suggest you learn to embrace and learn from the anxiety that all of our bodies produce as we interpret the changes going on around us. This is a good example of how the future that is coming demands that we build new languages of interpretation and new interpretations of familiar emotions.

In the end, we are observing the emergence of a new, global way of being. That is one more reason I ask you to resist being co-opted by information technology and to take responsibility as a community for directing the invention of a rich new, enlarged interpretation of the role of your venerable profession: We need your help.

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Coordinator, a highly regarded early "groupware" product for networked personal computers used by over 300,000 people worldwide. He has been awarded several U.S. patents for methods of designing and constructing software for coordinating the action of people and tools in digital networks. More recently, Bell was Senior Vice President, Design, for Business Design Associates, Inc., a distinctive team of academics and practitioners developing new theory and practices for management, education, entrepreneurship, innovation, trusting commercial relationships, and tools for coordination.

NOTES

1. This article is a revision of two keynote addresses, the first to the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (Sacramento, California, July 17, 1997) and the second to the Annual Meeting of the Society of California Archivists (Pasadena, California, May 1, 1998). The texts of both addresses are available at <http://www.rbarry.com>, one under the "guest authors" section and one under the "org change" section.
2. Because I am often critical in this article of certain facets of technology, some readers may be tempted to take away that I am an enemy of computers. It is not true. One major part of my work is the design of computer systems to help my clients do their work. I hold several patents on the operation of computer software for coordinating action in digital networks and in the past I have headed a computer software company.
3. The quotation is the first paragraph of the feature "About RMS" printed in every *Records Management Bulletin* of the Records Management Society of Great Britain from at least 1992 to the present (October 2000).
4. Archivists are not alone in this and that is why you face such a formidable opponent. Managers and so-called information or knowledge workers, for example, today often think of themselves as people who "process information."
5. See, for example, Tom Peters, *Thriving On Chaos: Handbook for a Management Revolution* (New York: Perennial Library, 1987).
6. A careful experiential introduction to this interpretation would take far more space than is available here. The first observation of the *performative* structure in our language, the structure in which we bring forth and shape action and realities in our worlds, appeared in the 1950s in the work of a philosopher named John Austin at Oxford University in England. See J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962). The main figures responsible for developing Austin's ideas since his first discoveries are Dr. Fernando Flores, who founded the company with which I worked for many years, and his professor, John Searle, of the University of California at Berkeley, who was a student of Austin. In 2001, Fernando Flores was elected a Senator in his native Chile. John Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969) and *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Please see the select bibliography following this article for citations to several of Flores's major publications.
7. For an illustration of involvement and commitment as effective ingredients for change (as well as of how listening, communication, and action can effect change in seemingly ossified organizations), see Thomas Petzinger Jr., "The Front Lines: Mexican Cement Firm Decides to Mix Chaos Into Company Strategy," *Wall Street Journal*, December 13, 1996, and Thomas Petzinger Jr, "The Front Lines: For This Chilean Firm, Commitment is What Creates Real Change," *Wall Street Journal*, May 30, 1997.
8. As an example of the intersection of leaders, followers, and constructive criticizers in creating change, see the discussion of Mothers Against Drunk Driving in Charles Spinosa, Fernando Flores, and Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Disclosing New Worlds: Entrepreneurship, Democratic Action, and the Cultivation of Solidarity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997): 89ff.
9. Michael Hammer, "Reengineering Work: Don't Automate, Obliterate," *Harvard Business Review* (July–August 1990): 104–112.

SELLING THE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES: CURRENT OUTREACH PERSPECTIVES

BY TAMAR G. CHUTE

ABSTRACT: In order to remain a viable part of their institutions, college and university archivists must promote their collections and services to their constituencies on and off campus. How should this be done? How do archivists reach faculty, students, administrators, and staff? This article focuses on eight college and university archivists and describes the outreach programs they have used, what successes and failures they have experienced, and why they believe outreach is essential. The author concludes that outreach must be central to what all archivists do, even at the expense of other archival functions, because it can solidify the archives' position within the college and university community.

Archivists need to bring themselves to the attention [of] people who would benefit from what we do—if only they knew about what we do.[1]

Introduction

"Outreach" is defined by the Society of American Archivists (SAA) as "organized activities of archives or manuscript repositories intended to acquaint potential users with their holdings and their research and reference value."[2] College and university archivists, as part of a larger academic community, must generate positive relationships with administration, staff, faculty, and students to insure continued financial and professional support from that community. In today's reality of stakeholders, dwindling resources, relevance, and accountability, institutions of higher learning are now forced to scrutinize every aspect of their academic communities. Each department and every program on campus is being asked to prove its worth. To this end, archivists must seek ways to justify and validate their existence, including expanding their customer base. Faculty, staff, and students need to know more about their college and university archives. User groups need to know that college and university archives have value, both to themselves and to the larger communities in which they participate and belong. These user groups need to know that archival materials are accessible and are relevant to what they do. Everyone on campus should know that the archivist is an important resource.

Engaging in outreach directs these user communities towards a heightened awareness of the archives and its resources. Outreach is a powerful tool: it teaches the university community about the history of the institution as well as about the value of the documents that the institution creates.

Although many colleges and universities employ archivists, very little has been written about the different ways that college and university archives reach their constituents, i.e., faculty, students, administration, and staff. Some archivists have written books on the role and functions of university and college archives and in them briefly discuss outreach. William Maher, in his book *The Management of College and University Archives*, addresses nearly every aspect of these institutions, including a section on outreach. In discussing the use of archives, Maher writes that ". . . the responsibility to see that material in one's archives is used is so fundamental that considerations of use should influence the conduct of the full range of archival activities."[3]

Other books and articles address general outreach practices, including ideas that college and university archivists can apply. Elsie Freeman Finch, in an article titled "Archival Advocacy: Reflections on Myths and Realities," states that:

> The ultimate archival function is to create programs that, as former New York State Archivist Larry Hackman said, "will ensure the identification, preservation, and accessibility of archives for years to come." To do this, we must shift our focus on records to a focus on customer relations, marketing, and long term program, seeking the support that these programs require.[4]

Similarly, Gregory Hunter, in his book *Developing and Maintaining Practical Archives: A How-To-Do-It Manual*, takes this sentiment one step further. He writes that outreach is essential: "Over the past decade, archivists have come to realize that outreach and promotion must be an integral part of archival work—not something done occasionally, as with an anniversary celebration."[5] These overall themes apply to all archivists. They say archivists should promote their archives so that their holdings are used and their archives are seen as viable resources.

College and university archivists need to recognize the relevance of these broader studies to their specific needs. Information gathered from other types of archives, including business and religious archives, can be very useful. Richard Cox writes that for institutional archives public programs are an important part of gaining support both inside and outside the organization. "Although the concept of public programs must be carefully reconsidered when used by institutional archives, these activities can be crucial for the success of the institutional archives."[6] Outreach can do many things. It can increase support for other archival needs, it can explain the need for the archives, and it can show the archivist how his or her program is perceived by the rest of the institution. This is important because, although college and university archives typically may have firmer support than do those in a business or religious institution, constant fund-raising and promotion are essential to survival. Case studies about archives in nonacademic environments can be used to learn and apply new techniques that may be relevant to the college or university setting. Some of these ideas will be discussed throughout this article.

In 1979, the College and University Archives Committee of the SAA produced a general study of archives in the United States and Canada. In a 1982 article, Nicholas C. Burckel and J. Frank Cook combined this SAA study with a study of Canadian archives, together with their own survey of American university and college archives. According to Burckel and Cook's research, use of collections was not a high priority for college and university archivists. They even noted that some college and university archives deliberately avoided publicity.[7] A great deal has changed since 1982.

In the intervening years there has been not only a general increase in attention to outreach within the archival profession, but there has been specific attention given to the college and university arena. An early example was a handout created by Timothy Ericson for a session entitled "Academic Outreach: The Use of Archival Materials on the College Campus" at the 1984 SAA annual meeting in Washington, D.C. Nine other archivists contributed to this handout and gave examples of their outreach programs.[8] Unfortunately, this handout was never published or widely disseminated. The handout can be useful to archivists because it gives specific examples that could be used in a college or university archives setting. Some ideas include creating bookmarks about the archives to hand out, and using anniversaries for outreach. In addition to Ericson's handout, three case studies were published between 1989 and 1991 that described outreach programs at Carleton College, Clemson University, and The Ohio State University.[9] Both at Clemson and Ohio State, the archivists created new programs that were used in conjunction with the schools' anniversaries. At Carleton, the case study describes using the archives with undergraduate students and explores the possibilities of outreach specific to student needs. While these articles are helpful to some extent—especially in a study of long-term archival practices—little has been written of late that explores outreach programs in use today at college and university archives.

Methodology and Arrangement

This study will first define "outreach" as it applies to university and college archives and discuss its importance. What will follow is a series of examples of outreach techniques used by archivists at specific institutions to promote their archives to students, faculty, and staff. Subsequently, the overall strategies of these archivists will be examined, including a discussion of various methods of outreach, e.g., exhibits, media coverage, and the Internet. Finally, the essay will conclude with a discussion of the ways archivists can evaluate the effectiveness of their outreach activities.

From the onset, it should be stated that this study is in no way an attempt to present an overall picture of outreach in American college and university archives. This is not a survey of all archives in an attempt to produce scientific data on the subject. Instead, this essay is intended to be a snapshot of specific institutions and the way their archivists view outreach and integrate it into their archives. To this end, archivists at six state universities and two private colleges were interviewed.[10] The interviews included questions about the archivists' role at their college or university, their thoughts on outreach programs, and the different programs they created to entice students, faculty, and staff to use and gain greater awareness of their archives. While some results appear similar, this study will show that each archivist has his or her own perspective on the best way to

promote archives. This study will also incorporate several published case studies and the author's experience as Associate University Archivist at The Ohio State University Archives.

The archivists who were interviewed for this study were not selected randomly or scientifically, and their intent was not to speak for all archivists.[11] The archivists were chosen because of their belief in outreach programs and their willingness to discuss the issue and share their experiences. As a result, it is important to note some disclaimers when using these archivists' views in a discussion about outreach. Due to their stated interest in outreach, there is a natural bias in this group to promote it. Additionally, the archivists interviewed represent an average of 21.5 years in the archival field, and an average of 18.6 years at a college or university archives. Therefore, they are more experienced in the archival field and are, on average, better positioned to participate in outreach activities at their institutions than are many other archivists. There is also a geographic imbalance to the group, with all but two of the archivists located in the eastern portion of the U.S.

Yet, in spite of this, there are many benefits resulting from using this group of archivists. While the archivists questioned are well established in the field, they have used their experience to try different outreach programs and experiment with possibilities. Although a small sample, they represent archives of varying sizes and are at institutions that range from very large to very small. And while some readers may see this group's experience as an unrealistic advantage compared to other archivists, these archivists have insights that can be beneficial to both those who have been in the profession for years and those who are just beginning.

What Is Outreach and Why Is It Significant?

SAA's official definition of "outreach" is narrower than the one used by the university and college archivists interviewed here. Outreach, to this group of archivists, includes anything that puts the archives and the archivist in contact with the public. Some of these archivists believe that everything he or she does is a form of outreach. Anne Turkos, University Archivist at the University of Maryland, defines "outreach" as activities going well beyond the SAA definition. Turkos includes in her concept of outreach such direct and indirect activities as speaking to an undergraduate student or meeting with a donor. Her goal is that all individuals coming in contact with the archives will leave with a good experience that they, in turn, will share with others outside the building.[12] This aspect of direct outreach can be identified as personal contact with members of the community through one-on-one or group communications. Another aspect of direct outreach involves placing written materials or exhibits at various locations around campus. Contact with materials clearly identified with the archives can leave an individual with a positive appreciation of the archives and what it has to offer. Given this broad view of outreach, it seems fair to say that direct outreach activities occur at all academic institutions.

While direct outreach is important and visible, indirect outreach is often difficult or impossible to track, yet is also extremely important. Indirect outreach includes reaching individuals who may never visit the archives. The hope is that these patrons, even from

a distance, will react positively if they hear "good things" about the archives or come to believe that their beloved university is known, in part, by the existence of its archives as a resource to the wider community. By having an impact on this wider community, the archives may gain support and be viewed by the administration, faculty, and students as an important component of the institution, similar to an art gallery that is kept open even if it is not as heavily visited as the basketball arena.

In addition to broadening the description of outreach, the archivists interviewed here view outreach as being of equal or greater importance to core archival duties such as arrangement and description.[13] Nearly every archivist agreed with Timothy Ericson of the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee who said that "outreach IS a core function—that it is every bit as important as appraisal and arrangement and description."[14] This is true in every type of archives. For instance, James O'Toole, in an article concerning the archdiocese of Boston, emphasizes the outreach lessons learned from the visit of Pope John Paul II to Boston in 1979: "Seize opportunities for creating good archival press whenever they come, adjusting your archival priorities when necessary to emphasize public outreach. The papers you will always have with you . . . and you can always go back to process them and produce finding aids that are works of archival art."[15] Some of the interviewees said that, although writing finding aids and processing papers are important, outreach can be even more significant. Leon Stout, University Archivist at Pennsylvania State University, commented that if the collection is not used, why is the archives doing anything else? Stout says that while archivists should arrange and describe the collection, just doing those things is "ridiculous" if no one walks through the door. All of these archivists have come to the conclusion that outreach is an essential part of any viable archives. If the archives does not present itself, it becomes irrelevant; if the archives is irrelevant, it will disappear.[16]

The debate over which comes first, outreach or arrangement and description, is complex even for archivists who strongly support outreach programs. Some of those interviewed cautioned that too much outreach can have serious repercussions when resources cannot back up claims.[17] Enough resources must be in place before extensive outreach is done. Shelley Wallace, Archivist at Hartwick College, commented that an archives cannot possibly begin outreach until certain basics are in place. Once the archives staff has created useful finding aids and is prepared to handle additional users, then outreach can be considered as important as arrangement and description.[18] If the archives has not done enough arrangement and description, the staff will have problems because they will be unable to meet patrons' demands. The work must be in order so that when users arrive they will find the archives willing and able to help. If not, as Ericson wrote, "[I]f outreach lures people to the archives and then they are disappointed, then you will NEVER get them to come back or support you."[19]

Unfortunately, archivists concerned over a lack of time and resources may cut public programs for fear that other less visible parts of the archives will be neglected. For instance, if two months are spent preparing an exhibit, then other things such as arranging a collection or writing a finding aid will be sidelined. While warnings about overemphasizing outreach activities may sound convincing, especially considering the large processing backlog in most archives, outreach must be done even in times of insufficient staff and large backlogs. If not, archivists risk losing visibility, support, and possi-

bly their very existence. Christopher Densmore, University Archivist at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo, pointed out that outreach programs say, "Hi! We're here!"[20] Unless the public—especially administrators and resource allocators—knows that the archives exists and understands its importance, the archives may be considered irrelevant and unworthy of support when money is tight. The archives cannot let administrators say, "What do they do?" It will not matter how well the archivist preserves and describes a collection if afterwards the archives no longer exists.[21] The archivist's job must include outreach.

Target Audiences: Students, Faculty, and Staff

College and university archivists must connect with everyone in the institution, from first-year students to the president. Since each group has different needs, the best way to do this is to target the groups separately. Students are perhaps the most difficult to reach because they move in and out of the institution every year. Students—even "traditional" archival users such as history students—often overlook the resources of the college and university archives because they do not know that the archives itself exists. Yet, because students represent such a large part of the campus community, and because they will impact the school long after they depart, efforts at increasing student awareness and use of the archives must be important goals. Archivists should work to create programs and instructional curricula for all students because, as Richard Cox writes, "the students of today represent future users and supporters of archives."[22]

College and university archivists, as members of a teaching institution, have an even stronger obligation to create educational programs for students. In these instances, archivists should consider outreach as a form of teaching, which is an essential part of their job. To fulfill this responsibility, archivists may develop term-length classes, or teach a section of a course, or collaborate with a colleague on other forms of bibliographic instruction. As a form of outreach, archivists can teach students about the history of the university, give instruction on the use of original materials, or even show how to get Dad a photograph of a famous football player. Many colleges and university administrations today emphasize the need to improve the undergraduate experience. Creating programs that increase student awareness of the archives may enrich that experience and foster students' curiosity and interest in their surroundings.

The number of students at a university can easily overwhelm an archives that is usually a small department with few employees. For instance, with a staff of seven, The Ohio State University Archives cannot handle the needs of 50,000 OSU students at the same time. Yet there are ways to reach this large body of students in manageable groups. In *The Management of College and University Archives*, William Maher writes that "[I]f one kind of student use tends to create more demand than the archives can handle, it should consider how standard outreach vehicles . . . can answer common questions. If the archives finds that it does not have enough undergraduate student use, it should contact instructors . . . to suggest a class assignment to write a short paper or speech on an aspect of college history."[23] Realizing both the archives' significance to the institution's community—as well as its limitations—the archivists interviewed demonstrated a variety of programs to promote their archives on campus.

Most of the interviewees reported interacting with students in classes, most often history classes. Working with the history department seems natural for archivists, but archivists can and should provide assistance to students in other departments.[24] In some instances, departments such as biology and religion do more with the archives than history or political science departments do.[25] At Pennsylvania State University (PSU) the archives works with architecture and landscape classes more than with other departments. These students perform projects on the history of buildings and, based on their research, redesign or create the campus of the future. For these classes, Stout participates in a panel that grades and discusses the students' projects.[26] In addition, Stout reports that the PSU archives works with English students when they write biographies on a specific figure from the university's past. PSU education classes use the university as a comparison model with other institutions of higher learning, and facilities-planning classes have used the archives for presentations on the history of the campus libraries. As a result, 60 percent of the PSU archives' patrons, which average 4,500 a year, are undergraduates.[27] Undoubtedly, Stout's innovative outreach throughout the university community swells these numbers.

Archivists in smaller colleges may be able to be even more involved with classes and with the entire student population. For instance, as Archivist at Smith College, Margery Sly gave presentations to many classes and used examples from the collections to teach students how to use primary sources. One of her objectives was to show students the relative value of the material as evidence. Sly made an annual presentation on the archives to new students at First-Year Orientation and at a special orientation for incoming African-American students. By doing so, Smith's students were exposed to the archives early in their career. This is important in that it increases the odds that these students will remember the archives as a resource, not only during their student life, but in their career after graduation or as supportive alumni.

Unlike students who come and go, faculty members tend to stay longer at an institution, often for their entire career. Therefore, archivists should spend considerable time with as many faculty members as possible. "The archivist and the faculty can and should enjoy a close working relationship," Nicholas Burckel writes.[28] The archives should help faculty in the classroom, in their research, and in day-to-day activities. If, for example, a professor happens into the archives looking for material to write an obituary or a tribute to a colleague, the archivist should take advantage of this visit to discuss other available material and to show how the archives can serve the faculty member's needs.

Faculty members cannot be left alone to find their way into the archives. They must be reminded of the archives' existence on an ongoing basis. At SUNY Buffalo, Densmore leaves nothing to chance. When he learns that a professor is interested in a certain topic, Densmore sends that person information about a useful collection that may connect to his or her interests. This is a way to regularly remind the faculty member about the archives' resources.[29] Similarly, at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, whenever a collection is processed Ericson sends copies of the completed finding aid to the related department and to the dean of the school. This shows the dean and the department that the archives has material that may be important to them and is also encouragement to use the collection.[30] Archivists can learn faculty members' needs from different sources, including publications, news releases, and articles in faculty/staff newspapers. The

archivist can then use this information to remind faculty that the archives exists and its staff is ready and willing to help.

Sometimes archivists at smaller colleges can work more closely with faculty than can staff at larger institutions. At Smith College, Sly created a useful and unique relationship with the faculty that would be difficult to form at an enormous university. Sly secured a two-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities that paid professors to do research in the archives' collections and to include the collections in their curricula. One professor who took part in the grant introduced an assignment requiring the students to use the archives to read the diaries and letters of Smith graduates. The professor then required the students to answer a set of questions that she found during her own research in the collection. In addition to this program, every semester Sly read the college's course guide and sent memos to faculty members who were teaching courses related to collections in the archives. Sly also offered to do exhibits connected with these classes or help in some way with their research. Sly's innovative approach to the faculty is especially appropriate to a small setting like that at Smith College that has fewer faculty and course offerings. While archivists at a large university cannot hope to track every course, they may be able to identify a subset of the course offerings and start an effective outreach program with selected faculty, similar to Sly's NEH grant. Archivists at all academic institutions, large or small, would benefit from a closer relationship with faculty members by showing a connection between archival collections and the professors' class work and research.

Some college and university archivists have good relationships with faculty; others do not. A poor relationship can be a problem for the archives, especially when faculty members send students off campus to do research that could be done at their own institution. For instance, at the University of Maryland, it seems that some faculty members do not know that the archives exists. Turkos tells the story of a history professor who sent his students to Baltimore for material that was actually in the historical manuscripts collection on campus. The archivist did not learn about this until a few students who were unable to drive to Baltimore finally struggled into the archives. After realizing what had happened, Turkos had the curator of historical manuscripts call the professor immediately. Although too late to help most of the students in that class, Turkos hoped this experience would show both students and faculty that in the future the archives on campus could be an important resource.[31]

Encouraging faculty to share their knowledge of the archives should be an important aspect of outreach. Too often many professors who use the archives throughout their career do not share the news of this "hidden" resource with others. While faculty members are under no obligation to share their sources, archivists should encourage faculty to become advocates for the archives. For example, a letter might be sent along with a brochure explaining the ways the archives can help in different classes or identifying collections that might fit into the curriculum. Today, with E-mail lists, archivists can send a short message inviting faculty to look at the archives' Web site or to visit the new exhibit in the reference room. By doing this with the intention of forming a closer bond with faculty, archivists can create a continuous link to campus departments and, through them, to their students.

Although the faculty is a key part of any college or university, departmental staff members and administrators may have more day-to-day need of the archives. To this end, archivists should cultivate this relationship through archival work and in records management. Many archivists also are records managers and are, therefore, responsible for connecting with staff at every departmental level.[32] By helping to explain the archives, the archivists show campus staff how to deposit and retrieve material when necessary. Staff members' files document everything at the university and are essential because they may be the only source of this material. Critical to the archives, the staff and administration are so important that their needs must, at times, take precedence over the needs of others. Good service for the administrative staff is essential to the well-being of the archives. A bad relationship can make accessioning material, communicating with key administrators, and acquiring needed resources much more difficult.

Ideally, archivists should always foster positive relationships with campus staff members. With that in mind, archivists must realize that the information available in the archives may not necessarily coincide with the needs and expectations of staff. For instance, at SUNY Buffalo, Densmore meets with development officers and public relations staff. In general, the development officers are interested in promoting the university and the archives can be a part of that process. On the surface, this is good for the archives—except when the information on file does not present the view of the institution the staff or administration wishes to portray. Densmore points out that archivists must sometimes confront ethical questions when dealing with public relations staff.[33] While public relations personnel want to promote the positive aspects of the university, they are not as eager to show the less attractive side. This raises the question, "Is the archivist obligated to provide all types of material or should he/she provide only the information that fits the university's need to promote itself?" In these situations, archivists must work diligently with campus staff to provide a careful balance between the need to promote and the need for accuracy. Effective outreach involves not only providing access to materials, but making sure patrons receive all relevant information.

Outreach Strategies

Archivists employ many different strategies to reach students, faculty, and staff. However, exhibits are one of the most common forms of outreach and are used to interact with every constituent group. All of the archivists interviewed for this study create exhibits of one kind or another, usually displaying them in multiple places or reusing them for other groups of viewers.[34] The University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign has multiple exhibit areas, but the one drawing the most attention is located in a hallway that leads to the vending machines. This exhibit is split into two sections. One section, "New in the Archives," is a rotating display of six to eight new documents recently accessioned into the collection. The other half of the case includes a series of exhibits in alphabetical sequence, each letter showcased for two weeks. Individuals would often come into the archives to discover more about one of the letter displays. Recently, University Archivist William Maher wrote that the archives changed the focus of the exhibit and switched to a cycle through the signs of the zodiac. "There is nothing astrological about our collection, but we can try to link the zodiac signs to related UI

activities, such as Water Resources Research and Water Recreation/Ecology for Aquarius."[35] These inventive exhibits draw attention to the archives and are well worth the effort to create them and to find display cases or areas that will draw the most viewers.

Although it is very important that, according to Gregory Hunter, outreach be an "integral part of archival work" and not done just occasionally, anniversaries and promotions are a natural place for archivists to reach the wider community.[36] Archivists can link exhibits to many types of promotional events. For example, Maher and the University of Illinois at Urbana archives recently sponsored a major campus event when they opened the James B. Reston Collection. In addition to a large exhibit, the events included nationally known speakers who also appeared on a National Public Radio call-in program in conjunction with the opening, together with a public lecture and a reception at the exhibit. "[The archives] managed to have more coverage of the Reston Collection on the front page of the local newspaper than the Illini victory over Michigan in football!" Maher said.[37] At the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, archivists created a major exhibit using material from the Milwaukee Press Club collection and formally opened the papers during Archives Week 1999. Approximately 150 persons attended the event, including the university chancellor and a number of media people. The archives received wide coverage in the print and television media, causing archivist Tim Ericson to say the event "resulted in new donations to the collection and enabled [the archives] to make some great media connections."[38]

These events on two major university campuses emphasize the importance of developing a mutually beneficial relationship with the media. Much can be done to cultivate that relationship.[39] Reporters in both the local media and on campus can be helpful allies. For instance, whenever Ericson notices an article in the news he believes would have been better if the reporter had used the archives, he sends the reporter a letter mentioning the archives' holdings. This action has elicited very good responses from local reporters. In another example, the University of Maryland's *Outlook*, the faculty and staff newsletter, has often featured the archives. Although the information published is sometimes inaccurate, it is worth the "hassle" to get the word out about the archives' existence. Not only is the image of the archives enhanced, but such publicity may lead to new acquisitions. In one instance, a man who worked for the campus photographer during campus riots in the 1970s read an article about the archives in *Outlook* and donated his collection of photographs taken during that time.[40]

Archivists also use alternative outreach venues to reach constituents. The Ohio State University Archives, for instance, created a slide presentation called "OSU Family Album: Another Look" that describes the history of the institution. Audiences have included first-year students, campus dignitaries, student organizations, professors, and alumni in Texas and Florida. The archivists can add and replace slides depending on the audience. Recently the archivists updated and altered the presentation specifically for the Office of Minority Affairs. The *OSU Alumni Monthly Magazine* has advertised the slide presentation, notifying individuals and groups who wish to use it for recruiting purposes that it is available for purchase and that a viewing can be scheduled by contacting the archives. Based on the success of the first slide presentation, the archives has created a second that focuses on specific buildings on campus. This presentation is

shorter and is intended to appeal more to students as well as to alumni and staff who were the target of the previous presentation.[41]

In today's electronic world, the Internet and electronic mail Listserv capabilities have become powerful outreach tools for all archives. The interviewees see their Web sites as useful for administrative communication, as outreach tools, and for keeping up with the rest of their institution. While none of the archivists could verify how useful their Web pages are, they did say they were adding to them and monitoring the activity on the site. Most concurred that a Web site is an important tool for patrons, and may have other uses. Densmore observed that a Web site can also serve as an excellent method of connecting the archives to the institution's resource allocators.[42] By having a Web site, the archives can prove that it remains relevant and can connect with the university's mission to be viable in the computer age.

A well-designed Web site also provides a link to administrators, staff, faculty, and students and allows quick response to questions. At the University of Illinois at Urbana, the archives developed a series of brochures and subject guides on the Web. The archives staff frequently refers patrons on and off campus to the site. Maher wrote that "the value of the Website as being first for administrative communication and response to inquiries (transfer guidelines for faculty papers, etc.) more than as an outreach vehicle per se." He adds that "given the campus buzz about outreach and access, this [having finding aids on the Web to make collections accessible] is a useful position to be in, but our thinking has flowed from the defensive rather than offensive position."[43]

One of the new possibilities in the electronic world besides Web sites may be the use of the campus Listserv for outreach activities. Although none of the interviewees mentioned using this resource, college and university archives should consider following the example of business archives to reach their constituents. Craig St. Clair, Corporate Archivist of Digital Equipment Corporation, used two different types of electronic on-line news bulletins to reach employees at the company. The E-mail campaign was sent to all employees, highlighting different themes of archival activity and interest.[44] College and university archivists could borrow this idea with some modifications. For example, students could be sent a message regarding their organizations and fun facts about the institution. Faculty and staff could be reminded that the archives would like to receive their records and publications. Both types of messages would bring the archives to the eyes of the campus and encourage use of the material. It would be beneficial for archivists to try this and see how such Listserv use could be applied to their own institution.

Although the Internet and E-mail can be useful outreach tools and bring people closer to the archives' holdings, there are some problems with users' expectations of instant gratification. While archivists usually answer telephone and letter requests quickly, E-mail has a different connotation that seems to demand immediate response. Some patrons also expect that "everything" is on the Web.[45] For example, The Ohio State University Archives has received requests for on-line descriptions of courses dating back to the 1940s while other patrons wonder when the archives will scan every yearbook onto the Web. To combat this misconception, the archives has included a disclaimer on its Web site's search page. When a search is completed, the page instructs the user: "If your search failed to return any results, please contact the Archives staff as

we do not have our full collection on-line."[46] This should encourage those who do not find what they are searching for to take the next step and E-mail or call the archives.

Alternatives to putting everything on-line are "frequently asked questions" and patron information pages. The University of Maryland Archives has added a section to its Web site enabling patrons to answer, themselves, some questions about the university. *University of Maryland A to Z: MAC to Millennium* is an alphabetical listing of facts, myths, and answers to frequently asked questions about the university. On this site, one can discover the number of trees on campus, the significance of a building, and when the first lacrosse team began play.[47] At the State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany, Geoffrey Williams is mounting a 100-page chronology of the history of the university that would give patrons a "single source of looking information up about the University."[48] By publishing this type of information on the Web, the archives is promoting itself by introducing the archives to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the public.[49]

Although little has been done to evaluate the way Web pages are used, it is clear that as an outreach tool the Internet has the potential to increase interest in and use of the archives. At the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, since 1996 "the number of incoming genealogical research requests that come via e-mail (most are directly related to the Web site) has tripled while the number that come in via telephone and regular mail has remained virtually the same." Archivist Ericson believes that this growth is due to the outreach provided by the archives' Web site.[50] While many Web patrons will be interested in specific college or university information, Web sites can also reach casual Web surfers. With an attractive and well-constructed page, the archives can connect to people who are not associated with the university but who may be interested in the archives' collections. By using technology to promote the archives, the archivist may expand its holdings, contact donors, and encourage researchers to visit. Even within the university, the archives' Web site has the possibility of connecting to other sites, such as the student activities page or those of individual departments. It may take time for archivists to learn to use the Internet and to use electronic Listservs to their greatest advantage, but as outreach tools, these technologies present many exciting possibilities.

How Effective Is Outreach?

Considering the many ways archives do outreach, archivists should ask the question "How effective are these programs?" While the literature on outreach stresses the importance of outreach, as it should, it does not explain how to evaluate these programs. To focus on outreach programs without identifying which ones are the most useful will not provide the "customer satisfaction" that Elsie Freeman Finch writes is necessary to an archives' survival.[51] Ericson comments that archivists seem to evaluate outreach by *what* they are doing, not on how effective it is. "[W]e ignore whether or not that 'something' is an effective use of time and resources."[52] While some attempts may be more effective than others, no one knows if the program that takes the most time is the best or the worst. Without some kind of evaluation procedure in place, judging the impact of outreach is difficult if not impossible. An archivist cannot guess beforehand whether patrons will like the program and must plan for any reaction. Afterwards, however, the

archivist should take note of any reaction for future use.[53] The archivist must learn to gauge an activity's effectiveness if decisions are to be made based on the most effective means of outreach. For example, how best should an archivist measure the impact of a particular exhibit? An archivist approaching a visitor may receive positive feedback, but weighing the response may be difficult. The visitor may have responded positively simply to be polite, or the patron may not know if this exhibit will influence future behavior in regard to use of the archives. Thus, it is critical that archivists develop means of evaluation so they can focus on those outreach programs that are the most successful.

One approach for archivists to assess their outreach programs would be to develop surveys on users' attitudes and reactions to outreach efforts. None of the college and university archives programs discussed in this article evaluate their outreach activities. This may be due, in part, to the fact that they have no set criteria for success or, if they have, none seem ready to share these thoughts with the archival community.

In reviewing archival outreach, five goals of outreach become apparent:

- To reach as many people as possible in promoting a positive attitude towards the archives
- To teach constituents about the role the archives can play in their professional and personal lives
- To have users recognize collections
- To teach the history of the institution
- To show that the archives staff and material are of value

Once goals are established, it becomes possible to measure the success of outreach activities in reaching these goals. If outreach programs can be shown to be successful, this information becomes a tool the archivist can use to "prove value" to administrators and to those responsible for resource allocation.

Conclusion

Outreach, in many forms, should be central to what all archivists do. Outreach can be as simple as removing the dust from a box before the archivist gives it to a researcher or as complex as removing old stereotypes about archives. College and university archivists should look at other types of archives and, among themselves, find new ideas and examples of public programs they might be able to modify for their own institution. Through outreach programs and efforts, college and university archivists can generate interest within their college or university, pleasing administrators while promoting the use of archival material as an aid to the entire academic community. Because of the archives' unique position within the college and university community as keeper of the institution's past, present, and future, those who come in contact with the archives will view it as a depository for new and important materials. This will benefit the archives both in terms of its collection and its long-term support.

Through outreach to targeted groups, the archives will be linked to students, faculty, and staff. Students, as members of hard-to-document groups, may provide material from

their student organizations. As alumni, they may provide letters or memorabilia from their tenure at the institution. They may perhaps learn to go to other archives, e.g., at the institution from which they receive their master's degree or Ph.D. Faculty members who come to view the archives as a necessary resource can be valuable allies for new collections and new users. Staff and administrators who use the archives for records management or to answer questions will come to see the staff and collections as important tools. By combining these groups into institutional allies, the archives will solidify its position within the college and university community. While outreach activities do not guarantee visibility, lack of outreach activities will certainly guarantee invisibility. Promoting the archives will ideally eliminate the question, "Why do we need one of those and what do they do anyway?"

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NOTES

1. Timothy Ericson, E-mail to author, November 7, 1997.
2. Lewis J. Bellardo and Lynn Lady Bellardo, comp., *A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1992): 24.
3. William J. Maher, *The Management of College and University Archives* (New Jersey: Society of American Archivists and Scarecrow Press, 1992): 315. See also Helen Willa Samuels's book *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities* (New Jersey: Society of American Archivists and Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1992).
4. Elsie Freeman Finch, "Archival Advocacy: Reflections on Myths and Realities," *Archival Issues* 20:2 (1995): 116. Finch also is the editor of *Advocating Archives: An Introduction to Public Relations for Archivists* (New Jersey: Society of American Archivists and Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), which can be used as a guide to public relations for all archives.
5. Gregory S. Hunter, *Developing and Maintaining Practical Archives: A How-To-Do-It Manual* (New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 1997): 198.
6. Richard J. Cox, *Managing Institutional Archives: Foundation Principles and Practices* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., 1992): 156.
7. Nicholas C. Burckel and J. Frank Cook, "A Profile of College and University Archives in the United States," *American Archivist* 45:4 (1982): 426.
8. Timothy L. Ericson, comp., "Academic Outreach: The Use of Archival Materials on the College Campus," unpublished handout distributed at the Society of American Archivists annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1984. In the introduction Ericson argued that "Outreach needs to become an ongoing part of our archival operations—just as appraisal and accessioning." Photocopy of material given to author by Ericson with permission to use.
9. Mark A. Greene, "Using College and University Archives as Instructional Materials: A Case Study and an Exhortation," *Midwestern Archivist* 14:1 (1989): 31–38; Michael F. Kohl, "It Only Happens Once Every Hundred Years: Making the Most of the Centennial Opportunity," *American Archivist* 54 (1991): 390–397; Raimund E. Goerler, "'Play it Again, Sam': Historical Slide Publication in Public Programming—A Case Study," *American Archivist* 54 (1991): 378–388.
10. Special thanks to the following individuals who participated in the interviews: Christopher Densmore (State University of New York at Buffalo), Timothy Ericson (University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee),

William Maher (University of Illinois at Urbana), Margery Sly (Presbyterian Church, USA), Leon Stout (Pennsylvania State University), Anne Turkos (University of Maryland), Shelley Wallace (Hartwick College), Geoffrey Williams (State University of New York at Albany).

11. These institutions were not picked at random, but rather were chosen with help from Bruce Dearstyne and Anne Turkos based on the goals of the original student research project at the University of Maryland, College of Library and Information Services.
12. Anne Turkos, interview by the author, College Park, Maryland, October 22, 1997.
13. Bruce Dearstyne has suggested merging reference, outreach, and public programming to "stimulate program development" and increase use. Bruce W. Dearstyne, "What Is the *Use* of Archives? A Challenge for the Profession," *American Archivist* 50 (1987): 86. Timothy Ericson wrote, "We may employ all these tools skillfully; but if, after we brilliantly and meticulously appraise, arrange, describe and conserve our records, nobody comes to use them, then we have wasted our time." Timothy Ericson, "'Preoccupied with our own gardens': Outreach and Archivists," *Archivaria* 31 (1990–91): 117.
14. Timothy Ericson, E-mail.
15. James M. O'Toole, "The Pope and the Archives: A Study in Archival Public Image," in Finch, *Advocating Archives*, 119.
16. Stout noted, "[The] more irrelevant, the less resources you get 'til you disappear." Leon Stout, telephone interview by the author, November 6, 1997.
17. William Maher, University Archivist at the University of Illinois at Urbana, commented that public programs are very important for archives. However, he does not believe that it is essential to create specific time that is set aside for them. Maher said that it is fine sometimes to be reactive and not proactive, since part of effective public programming is to be responsive to the questions posed by users. He added that responding to inquiries about collections that are processed, arranged, and described is a part of outreach. William Maher, telephone interview by the author, November 12, 1997.
18. Shelley Wallace, telephone interview by the author, November 5, 1997.
19. Ericson, E-mail. Turkos echoed this sentiment: "If you toot your own horn and can't back it up with services, it's a waste of time and effort," Turkos, interview.
20. Christopher Densmore, telephone interview by the author, November 4, 1997.
21. Margery Sly, telephone interview by the author, November 4, 1997.
22. Cox, 165.
23. Maher, 261.
24. Some archivists, like Geoffrey Williams at the State University of New York at Albany, do presentations on the information in their own archival collections as well as instructing students about archives in general. Recently, Williams increased the number of archival class presentations he does for graduate and undergraduate students, including those who would not be considered typical users of the archives, such as the students in the children's literature classes in the School of Education. Geoffrey Williams, E-mail to author, January 24, 2000.
25. Greene, 35.
26. Stout identified other courses that utilize the archives, including social studies education classes, facilities planning, higher education, sports history, and speech courses.
27. Stout, telephone interview.
28. Nicholas C. Burckel, "The Expanding Role of a College or University Archives," *Midwestern Archivist* 1:1 (1976): 10. Another commentary on the relationship of the archivist to faculty states that "[t]he successful college or university archivist has close, cordial, and effective relationships with the faculty on his campus." Maynard J. Brichford, "University Archives: Relationships with Faculty," *College and University Archives: Selected Readings* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1979): 31.
29. Densmore, telephone interview.
30. On the other hand, Wallace at Hartwick College used to send out a list of specific collections to faculty connected to their research. She decided not to continue this when she received mixed responses from the faculty. Wallace, telephone interview.
31. Turkos, interview.
32. For instance, at the University of Illinois at Urbana, University Archivist William Maher is in charge of the scheduling of records. At The Ohio State University, University Archivist Raimund Goerler schedules records and the archives sends E-mail messages to remind the deans about their record-keeping requirements.

33. Densmore, telephone interview.
34. For instance, SUNY at Albany did an exhibit on theater that was displayed in the library, the theater department, and finally landed in the Alumni House for two years.
35. William Maher, E-mail to author, January 20, 2000.
36. Hunter, 198.
37. Maher, E-mail.
38. Timothy Ericson, E-mail to author, January 25, 2000.
39. Ericson, E-mail, November 7, 1997.
40. Turkos, interview.
41. Goerler, 387. This information also includes the author's insight as Associate University Archivist at The Ohio State University.
42. Christopher Densmore wrote that he "strongly suspect[s] that NOT having a Web site would do us harm with our resource allocators. Keeping up with technology, particularly since the University is marketing itself as high tech, demonstrates that we are a viable part of the information resources of the institution (and hence contributing to the mission of the university and to the institution's credibility in the computer age)." Christopher Densmore, E-mail to author, January 25, 2000.
43. Maher, E-mail to author. The University of Illinois at Urbana archives' Web site can be found at <http://www.library.uiuc.edu/ahx>.
44. Craig G. St. Clair, "Electronic Outreach in the Archives: Bringing Them in at Digital Equipment Corporation," *Society of American Archivists Business Archives Section Newsletter*, 1994. Available at <http://saa-businessarchives.com/saa_newsletter-archive.html> (January 13, 2001).
45. Densmore commented that some people think that ". . . if they have seen your Web site, they have seen everything, and there is no need to visit the Archives or make any further inquiries." Christopher Densmore, E-mail.
46. The Ohio State University Archives' Web site can be found at <http://www.lib.ohio-state.edu/arvweb>.
47. The University of Maryland Archives' Web site can be found at <http://www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/ARCV/univarch.html>.
48. Geoffrey Williams, E-mail to author, January 24, 2000. The SUNY at Albany Web site can be found at <http://www.albany.edu/library/divs/speccoll>.
49. Connecting to everyone at an institution is easier in some instances than in others. For instance, at Hartwick College, Wallace is linked to an extremely well-connected campus. All students receive laptop computers from the college when they arrive, and they are all connected to the Internet. Because the students are so involved with the Web, the archives has made an effort to capitalize on this resource. The archives' Web site includes all of the collections available at the archives. Each description has an introduction, biographical information, the scope of the holdings, and a complete inventory of the collection. The Hartwick College archives' Web site can be found at <http://www.hartwick.edu/library/archives.html>.
50. Ericson, E-mail, January 25, 2000.
51. Finch, 118.
52. Ericson, E-mail, November 7, 1997.
53. Ann Pederson, "User Education and Public Relations," in Ann Pederson, ed., *Keeping Archives* (Sydney: Australian Society of Archivists, Inc., 1987): 313.

BY FAIR MEANS IF YOU CAN: A CASE STUDY OF RAISING PRIVATE MONIES TO SUPPORT ARCHIVAL PROGRAMS

BY HERBERT J. HARTSOOK

ABSTRACT: More and more archival administrators are turning to the private sector, seeking funds to supplement their budgets. This article analyzes a program that has been successful in raising a significant endowment over a relatively short period. It builds on that analysis to describe fundamental development practices as they apply in an archival setting. If you believe in the importance and value of what you do, and can verbalize those feelings and your excitement about your work and repository, you can be a successful fund-raiser.

The philosopher Horace once wrote, "Get money by fair means if you can; if not, get money." Active fund-raising is becoming a regular component of the daily routine of the archival administrator. Endowments and friends societies are increasingly important to the development of manuscript repositories and archives. While few would claim to enjoy asking for contributions, carefully planned and successful development work allows the funding of exciting programs and creates strong ties with a network of valuable supporters invested in the success of the repository's programs.

The Modern Political Collections Division of the University of South Carolina's South Caroliniana Library is relatively small. We have an ambitious collecting program and a relatively static budget that funds two full-time staff members, archival and office supplies, and other necessities. Significant private support, through endowments and direct gifts that underwrite specific projects, is essential to our vision of Modern Political Collections as a vigorous entity promoting the study of government and politics in South Carolina. When the division was created in 1991, we knew that, if we were to be successful, we would have to develop our endowment just as energetically as we developed our collections.

Donors of collections and materials are likely prospects for monetary contributions to support the repository. Collecting the papers of contemporary legislative leaders creates remarkable opportunities for fund-raising. Our typical donor is living, well-to-do or even wealthy, usually a skilled fund-raiser, and possesses remarkable contacts with people of wealth. These donors have invested themselves in our program through the gift of their papers and their contacts with our staff. They are often willing to assist us in

our development work by contacting prospective donors of collections, by describing the fine services they have received with the donation of their own papers, and by urging prospects to consider the donation of their papers. Donors may also help raise money to support repository programs. Unless some institutional requirement prohibits you from doing so, use the good offices of your donors for development. I have been pleasantly surprised at the effort our donors have put into helping us solicit gifts of papers on our behalf, and their own, often generous, contributions to our endowment.

Among my earliest donors was a retiring state legislator. We had not met before I visited his office to have the deed of gift signed and to inventory his records. I arrived a few minutes early and chatted with his assistant. I mentioned that some financial assistance to underwrite processing costs would allow us to process the collection quickly and conduct some oral history interviews as a component of the papers project. I casually asked if he thought his boss would be amenable to a request for funds and he encouraged me to bring it up. I broached the idea—that he consider either making a tax deductible contribution to our endowment along with his gift of papers or lend his name and prestige to a mail solicitation that we would undertake—with the member. Ultimately, he chose the latter route and we drafted a letter that was signed by two prominent South Carolinians, one Republican, one Democrat, and sent it to a select list of family and associates of the donor and the membership of our library's friends organization.

Five percent of those people he had listed responded to our solicitation. Development professionals consider this a fairly high rate of return, with three percent being closer to the norm. Gifts ranged from $25 to $1,000, and the appeal raised close to $9,000 toward our initial goal of $12,000. The $12,000 budget included outreach components that we easily lopped from the project. We counted the fund-raising effort a success as the money covered a graduate assistant dedicated to the project and all the supplies used to rehouse the collection. It also introduced the division to a number of influential and politically aware people. But it proved the truth of a fund-raising maxim that I have heard time and again: it is much better to target your efforts toward potential donors of significant gifts than to expend your energies in broadcast appeals to the masses.

The definition of a major gift varies from repository to repository. Our school of law defines a major donor as one capable of a six-figure gift. At our library, it is $5,000. This doesn't mean that you sneer at $50 gifts, simply that your energies are aimed at donors you believe have the potential to become supporters of your organization and the financial capability to make a major gift. At a recent development meeting, we were told that 72 percent of all higher education gifts come from individuals as opposed to foundations or corporations, and that most of these gifts are from people aged 60 and above. That is your target audience. Typically, gifts to Modern Political Collections range from $2,000 to $10,000. Our largest gift to date is $100,000. We are rarely turned away cold when we ask for money. This surprises me because we are often competing with other good repositories for these collections; thus, many prospects have alternatives to our library.

Clear goals and a long-term plan are essential to successful fund-raising. We inaugurated a general endowment to benefit Modern Political Collections in 1995 and currently have three endowed accounts totaling slightly more than $271,000. We have received pledges of an additional $247,000. Customarily, institutions spend a

percentage of the income from their endowments, with the remaining fraction added to the principal. This ensures the health of the endowment by allowing for inflation and the benefits of growing the endowment. At the University of South Carolina, we are allowed to spend five percent of endowed income each fiscal year. Any surplus is added to the endowment's principal. Thus, our endowment will provide more than $13,500 for expenditure during fiscal 2000–2001. The high returns of recent years have seen endowments grow tremendously from income alone, but we also anticipate receiving several major gifts in the next two years.

Our immediate goal for the endowment is $1,000,000. At this level, endowment income will support a badly needed full-time project archivist, three graduate assistants working half-time during the school year, and some special expenditures. Our long-term goal is $1,750,000. At that level, the endowment will also support a research awards program, a major annual outreach activity such as a symposium, and additional assistantships. The sooner we reach these monetary goals, the sooner we can realize our vision for Modern Political Collections.

A clear and cogent long-range plan is critical for successful development. Every time you approach a prospective donor ("prospect" for short) with a proposal seeking a contribution to your program, you must share your vision and plans for your organization; strive to persuade that individual or organization to buy into your vision for your repository; and show that the funds you seek are necessary to achieve that vision. If that prospect is excited by your plan, he will contribute. In communicating with potential donors, you must express your need for contributions clearly and concisely. Your statements should describe the benefits that will result from each gift, and usually what acknowledgment you will make of that gift.

The University of South Carolina is a state-supported institution. We have to combat the feeling that we are fully supported through tax dollars. We find it a telling point in speaking with potential donors to note that only 38 percent of the university budget comes from tax dollars, a percentage that has been in steady decline over recent years. That statistic is a good starting point in convincing potential donors of our real need for private support.

Fund-raising success is also dependent on your ability to share your passion for your work. I believe in what I'm doing and it is easy for me to speak passionately about the future of Modern Political Collections. Also, I can show that we have been successful in raising funds and that we have been an excellent custodian of our endowment. People want to be associated with successful programs and appreciate seeing that early gifts have moved the division forward in its development plan and closer to its ultimate goals. If you are a good custodian, it is likely that past donors will make repeat contributions to your program and/or become volunteers helping you raise additional monies. Many of our donors have followed their initial gifts with subsequent, often larger, contributions. Several have also played critical roles in persuading prospects who had earlier turned us down to reconsider placing their papers with us.

I often make my "ask"—the formal request for a contribution—fairly early in the relationship. When I approach people regarding their personal papers, I often talk about the endowment and our long-term vision for Modern Political Collections. I tell them that, while we want their collection regardless of any promise of financial support, we

hope they will consider making a contribution that approximates our anticipated costs in processing their collection and any special expenses we anticipate, such as those involved in mounting an exhibit or publishing a collection guide.

Most development experts recommend that you cultivate a close relationship with the prospect before making your request for funds. My approach is unusual but, I believe, effective. Possibly, we have enjoyed success because we: 1) typically seek amounts less than $25,000; 2) link the amount clearly and precisely to the work we will perform on the collection; and 3) point out that the services we offer have value. In making the ask, I am careful to note that our donors typically underwrite the processing and preservation of their collection.

Our oral history program has been a great help in developing personal relationships necessary to successful fund-raising. We've recorded close to one hundred hours of interviews with donors of papers and key associates. The hours spent together create bonds that are difficult to forge otherwise in a donor-archivist relationship. You share stories during the interview process, socialize a bit as you set up, take breaks, and take down your equipment, and often break bread together. My relationships with donors I have interviewed are uniformly stronger than with donors I have not interviewed. And never underestimate the value of cultivating key associates. Often, appointments secretaries or administrative assistants serve as gatekeepers; you have to go through them to get to the donor. If they believe in your program, they can be of immense help to you in many ways. That help can range from ensuring that your calls are returned to providing you with tips for good questions to ask during an oral history interview or stories they have heard that should be recorded. The ties created during the oral history process are strong and personal and provide many benefits to the archivist.

If you are part of a large organization, you will rarely work alone in development. Your administration or development office will often be actively involved in your fund-raising efforts. You may need to clear your prospects with a parent organization before approaching them. Our library system has its own development officer, and she and I work closely together and usually talk several times a week. The library's director and our dean take an active interest in our progress, particularly in any events we plan or media coverage we receive. If I schedule a luncheon with a prospect, I usually invite one or more of these people to join me. Prospects are often impressed that these administrators are interested in meeting with them, and the other university representatives make for livelier conversation. The downside of this is that, at times, you will need to work to control the conversation and ensure that you have the opportunity to present your appeal.

The work of a development officer has been compared to that of a Sherpa guide. The development officer cultivates potential donors and strives to bring those prospects into contact with people within the organization who have the status and/or expertise to further cultivate that prospect and ultimately make the ask. The library has identified approximately one hundred major prospects; we are careful to make sure they are invited to events the library hosts and to keep them apprised of library news. Typically, university development officers work most closely with deans. Cultivation takes time. Our deans are encouraged to commit 50 percent of their work week to development. Many do less. Some do more. But this points out the time-consuming nature of fund-

raising work. And few major donors are amenable to a quick negotiation of a gift. Significant gifts often take over a year to materialize.

Relationships with prospects capable of a major gift typically develop over a period of years. That development continues after your receipt of the initial gift. Past contributors are prime candidates for future gifts. Many past contributors make annual or semiannual gifts to our endowment. Sometimes this is a result of our requesting help with a particular project; sometimes their gifts come out of the blue. In one instance, we decided not to ask for a contribution to the endowment when we solicited a collection for fear the request might offend this particular donor. Over a year after we began receiving the papers, without any urging on our part or discussion, we received a check for several thousand dollars. The donor continues to make regular gifts of $2,000 to $5,000, without our ever having asked for a contribution. Another donor completed a multiyear pledge and immediately volunteered his intention to make an additional, substantial gift. With a third donor, we requested and received an annual gift in the range of five to seven thousand dollars. Our relationship has developed and we recently requested and have been pledged a six-figure gift. So, once papers and even a generous gift are in hand, the door does not close to future gifts. Indeed, over time, as your relationship with the donor matures and you prove you are a good steward of both papers and contributions, the donor's ties to and stake in your repository grow. Future gifts become more, rather than less, likely. You may well find that these donors offer you much more than money.

Your donors of collections can serve as your most capable field representatives and play leading roles in persuading associates to place their papers in your care and possibly contribute to your endowment. It is quite easy to understand why people might not respond to an unsolicited letter from an unknown archivist seeking their papers. The prospective donor might not even be familiar with the placing of personal papers in a manuscript repository or appreciate the honor the request represents. It is just as easy to appreciate that a call from a respected associate or even a mentor will receive a close hearing. A strong recommendation from such a person will carry great weight.

One prospective donor had politely refused an initial approach, but had not yet determined where he intended to place his papers. Since he had not selected a repository, I continued to stay in contact with him, writing him about new collections, sending publications in which we were mentioned, and speaking with him on occasion when we would meet at some public function. After four years with little headway, I asked several of our donors if they would contact this person on our behalf. Shortly thereafter, one of these gentlemen did indeed speak with the prospect at a dinner and argued that no repository could surpass the expert services we provide. Meanwhile, our donor's wife spoke with the prospect's wife. Both mentioned that some financial assistance would be required along with the papers. Within a month of that dinner, we met with the prospect and received the pledge of his papers and financial support. While our diligence in maintaining contact with the prospect certainly played a small role in persuading him, I know that without my donors' good words we would probably never have received this important collection. This kind of help has been offered to us time and again and is invaluable. In addition to the concrete help in securing collections and funding, this support is also terrifically rewarding on a personal level, providing proof of the esteem in which donors of collections hold you and your program.

Consider establishing an "advisory committee" for fund-raising to cement and formalize your relationships with supporters of affluence and influence. People of affluence are those who have the financial ability to make a significant contribution. These should dominate your committee. People of influence may not be in a position to make a significant contribution, but are associated with people of affluence and can assist with introductions and in encouraging donations to your organization. The size of your committee relates to the amount of money you hope to raise: the larger the amount, the larger the committee. Typically, these committees consist of at least 12 members.

To summarize, archivists can raise private monies to support their programs. A good development program will be time-consuming, but a strong program will benefit both the bottom line and provide unexpected benefits in collection development and other areas such as staff development and general support for archival endeavors.

In a Nutshell

1. Identify clear, concise fund-raising goals that relate directly to your organizational goals. Identify intermediate as well as long-term goals. You may raise money for immediate expenditure or for endowments. Goals may range from the purchase of special equipment, to reformatting a series or collection, to endowing a staff position or annual symposium.

2. Identify and cultivate prospects able to make a major gift. Relationships take time, but relationship building has a cumulative effect. Past donors are your best prospects for future, usually larger, donations. People give money to people, and your personal relationship with prospective donors is key to developing that contact. Never turn down an invitation to share a meal. It creates a unique bond.

3. Take advantage of any assistance your organization or your friends can provide. Be alert to relationships that may exist between prospects and current donors and supporters. Also, don't forget the volunteers available within your organization. A president, dean, or athletic coach may be available to help you if the amount being sought is high enough. Volunteers can pave the way for your solicitation with a call or letter, accompany you and introduce you to the prospect, or even make the ask on your behalf.

4. You can't thank donors enough. Donors are invested in your program. Keep them apprised of what you are doing and particularly of any progress made as a result of their support. Consider a newsletter, either your own or piggybacking on an existing publication, to inform and excite interest in your work.

5. Never make a promise you cannot keep and always do what you say you will do. Remember, your current donors are a primary source of future gifts and a key resource in encouraging their peers and associates to support your program. Do not disappoint them. And do your best to ensure that your administration does not make a promise that you cannot keep.

6. It takes money to raise money and fund-raising is time-consuming. Development costs often run between eight and 16 percent of the total amount raised. You will incur expenses wining and dining your prospects. Working lunches are a staple of development. Use good stationery and consider having it personalized as you see fit. Plan on trips out of town and possibly out of state. You may even plan overnight trips to maximize your time in a distant city, or to ensure that you arrive fresh and on time for an early meeting away from your home base.

Conclusion

It's been said that the only thing more painful than asking for money is being asked to make a contribution. Yet the relationships I've developed in seeking gifts to our endowment have been personally and professionally rewarding and the development work itself has helped me focus and clarify our goals for Modern Political Collections. I often recall the words of Samuel Pepys who, on March 21, 1667, noted in his diary, "It is pretty to see what money will do."

Additional Reading

Becoming a Fundraiser: The Principles and Practice of Library Development, by Victoria Steele and Stephen D. Elder (Chicago: American Library Association, 1992), is a small (129 pp.) book that provides an expert, readable, and pragmatic analysis of fund-raising for libraries. The book is aimed at library directors and deans, but the commentary applies equally well to administrators in archives and special collections repositories. Some readers may remember Ms. Steele from her excellent presentation at the 1996 annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists held in San Diego. One key point the authors make regards the need to evaluate success on the basis of both the total amount of the contributions received and the utility of those gifts in moving your organization toward its goals. A minor gift to a discretionary fund may be more valuable to the organization than a major gift that binds the organization to some activity, such as hosting an annual reception or symposium, only marginally connected to the organization's goals.

The Millionaire Next Door: The Surprising Secrets of America's Wealthy, by Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko (Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1996), is a popular book of great utility to the fund-raiser, opening our eyes to opportunities and prospects we might otherwise ignore. The book is based on extensive surveys and provides valuable insights for anyone interested in development work. It points out that the wealthy are all around us and, indeed, often look like us, shunning trappings of wealth such as fancy homes and cars. As a fund-raiser, you must be attuned to people's potential for a major gift. We worked with one couple who had amassed a collection of material we sought for the library. Nothing in their lifestyle suggested they had significant means, but in talking with them we discovered that they had accumulated property currently valued at over one million dollars. Managing the property was becoming burdensome and they were considering selling their holdings. They had no children and were willing to

consider our proposal that they establish an endowment at the university. This would ensure a lasting legacy and offer tax benefits that could positively impact their future cash flow. This couple is typical of the "millionaire next door," in that they live below their means and exhibit few outward signs of wealth, yet have tremendous potential as donors.

Another recent publication of merit is *Library Fundraising: Models for Success*, edited by Dwight Burlingame (Chicago: American Library Association, 1995). This volume uses case studies to show the variety of tools available for library fund-raising. The seventh and final chapter, "The Role of Special Collections in Library Development," by Victoria Steele, is basically a synopsis of her earlier book, described above.

Building Bridges: Fund-raising for Deans, Faculty, and Development Officers, edited by Mary Kay Murphy (Washington, D.C.: Council for Advancement and Support of Education, 1992) presents a comprehensive outline for developing a fund-raising program in an academic setting. Murphy notes in her introduction, "The major focus of the book is on the dean's and the faculty member's role in development work. A secondary focus is on the teamwork and synergy that develop in the best efforts among deans, faculty members, and development officers."

Each of these books will suggest further reading, much of it in the areas of sales and marketing.

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WORDS AND MUSIC: UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF TEXTUAL CONTENT ON COMMERCIAL SOUND RECORDING LABELS

BY ROBERT PRUTER

ABSTRACT: Textual content on the labels of commercial phonograph records is an important document for music research, serving as a basis for building discographies and writing music histories. Yet the research value afforded by disc textual content has not been understood or appreciated by sound archivists. This article explains the kind of textual information that researchers use with the aim of helping sound archivists fully appreciate how their collections can be used. A full understanding of the value of this textual content can help sound archivists make appraisal, preservation, and cataloging decisions.

Overview of Textual Content Issues

Sound recordings—particularly commercial phonograph recordings—represent a highly specialized area in the archival field that can involve costs and technical issues far beyond the capacity of most archives to handle. Fortunately for archivists who have taken on the task of adding phonograph archives to their collections or who have inherited such collections, a body of literature has developed in the past few years that explores the appraisal, cataloging, and preservation of such material.[1]

However, the literature on sound archives fails to note that commercial phonograph records should be appraised, catalogued, and preserved by archivists with the understanding that the textual content provided by such items—not only on the label but also scratched in the "wax" (vinyl or shellac)—can be just as important as the sound content the discs provide. Sound archivists need to understand how music historians and other researchers can use textual content as documentary sources. Only then can archivists make good decisions about their sound recording collections.

Imagine the scenario when an archives acquires a cracked, unplayable 78-rpm record produced by a small, independent label. If this song is available on a current CD, the guidelines in much of the current appraisal and preservation literature suggest that this

78 is disposable. For example, in a guide published by the American Association for State and Local History in 1979, *The Preservation and Restoration of Sound Recordings*, Jerry McWilliams suggested that a broken 78 be taped together temporarily to record its sonic content. He required that no attempt be made to "preserve the physical object," and said nothing about the text on the disc's label.[2]

More recently, Christopher Ann Paton (1997) recommended "prompt reformatting" of old and vulnerable media, which might include 78s, but nowhere did she suggest that their label text be transcribed to the new medium.[3] In a preservation discussion (1993), Australian archivist David Roberts wrote that "there is no point in keeping" sound recordings that are so extensively damaged that replay is impossible.[4]

That sound archivists have been largely oblivious to textual content was underscored by British archivist Alan Ward (1990), who unhappily observed that "the principle that 'the sound is more important than the medium' has gained general acceptance throughout the sound archives profession." He contrasted this viewpoint to that of textual archivists, which holds that even after copying for conservation purposes, the original documents must be retained as the copy never fully transfers all the evidential value.[5]

It appears that Ward understands the importance of saving the textual content of phonograph discs. This may not be clear to most sound archivists reading his guide, because nowhere in his book is there a definitive declarative statement telling the sound archivist that a collection of commercial phonograph discs has to be appraised, processed, and preserved with the idea of saving the textual content. However, Ward asserted that badly damaged discs should be retained after reformatting. Even a 78 broken into pieces must be saved according to Ward, who advised that "each piece should be separately housed in a suitably labeled sleeve and all kept away from the main collection of undamaged discs."[6]

There is one arena in sound archives research where there is an essential and unambiguous understanding of the importance of the textual content on commercial phonograph recordings, and that is the Association of Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC). The membership of this organization includes private collectors, institutional sound archivists, sound technicians, and others concerned with the collection, cataloguing, and preservation of sound recordings.

Because the interests and research activities of ARSC members have always been concerned with the collection, cataloguing, and preservation of sound recordings in terms of their documentary value to music historians—particularly in discographical research—the textual content of such recordings has always been accorded as much weight as the sound content. It is somewhat surprising that the understandings relating to textual content of phonograph recordings in the papers and reports written by ARSC members (usually in their journal, *ARSC Journal*) have not filtered into the general archival literature.[7]

The Role of Discography in Music Research

The general lack of appreciation of the evidentiary value of textual elements on commercial phonograph discs by the archives profession goes against the grain of how music researchers look at a phonograph record. They see not only a document of the

performance but also a document that contains textual information that augments their understanding of the performance, the performer, and the company that made the record. This is especially true for small labels about which little internal office documentation survives in institutional or general archives. A series of releases from a small label can serve as the one area of documentary evidence in the absence of any other.

A good portion of recorded music has been well-documented in published discographies, electronic databases, and company files. That is because major labels have recorded much of American music, and these or their successor companies are still operating and have retained extensive files and extensive collections of master recordings. Discographers have made use of these files to publish a great variety of discographies that list complete recording session information, including performers, date, city, studio, accompanying musicians, master numbers, release numbers, and the various takes of each song.

On the other hand, there is a great body of music, particularly the vernacular forms—blues, jazz, hillbilly, and ethnic—that were recorded for small, mostly obscure companies. Most have gone out of business, leaving few or no company documents of their activities to posterity and leaving no files from which music researchers can discern session information. Researchers' only recourse is to turn to the written documentation that does exist, namely the phonograph record products of these companies. By retrieving information from the records, researchers can obtain an amazingly developed portrait of a company's operation. By building matrices from the information obtained from the master numbers that appear on each record, historians of popular music, especially jazz historians, have developed fairly complete recording histories of certain companies in almost total absence of any traditional textual documentation.

Most sound archives unwittingly recognize that there is a textual content aspect to their collection when they organize the collection by label and by issue number. Elwood A. McKee, writing in 1996 for *ARSC Journal*, said, "Extensive experience with large institutional and private collections indicates that some form of label-name/issue number order is the most widely used [method] for shelving collections."[8] Ted Sheldon, a librarian at the University of Missouri–Kansas City, noted this procedure when he said, "A commonly repeated opinion of some librarians is that they cannot resist a numbered series."[9] Sheldon then raised a cost and storage issue. "If the decision has been made to collect all recordings in a series (e.g., by label), is the archive prepared to add relatively insignificant items along with others having great significance?"[10]

While Sheldon rhetorically questioned whether an entire series has significant merit, there are two solid reasons archivists should collect a numbered series: its historical value and its discographical value. Session information can be revealed about the company by the "insignificant items" mentioned by Sheldon. A numbered series can provide a chronology that shows the whole history of the recorded output of a label, whether it consist of 78s, 45s, or LPs. A numbered series for singles (78s and 45s) in particular can provide a discographer a solid look at the recording history of the company, which is particularly important when dealing with small companies that have disappeared and left no recording session documentation. It is a situation where the whole may be greater than the sum of its parts. It is certainly impractical to collect all the various series of a major label, such as RCA or Columbia, but for a small

independent label or a particular series (such as blues or hillbilly) of a major label the approach makes sense.

As mentioned, most major label recording sessions have been made available to researchers in published discographies, but even these can be incorrect, and access to the original records is often necessary. The published discographies have always had problems with incorrect data, much of it drawn from record companies files, and the situation may be getting worse. Tim Brooks commented in 1996: "As computers move us into the next generation of discography, and past work is incorporated into ever larger databases, unsourced and sometimes questionable data is infecting discography like a computer virus."[11]

The value of discographical research and its relationship to archives has been recognized for a long time. The *Library Trends* special issue devoted to sound archival issues published in July 1972, contained an essay by Gordon Stevenson wholly devoted to the value and purpose of discographies. He provided an excellent definition of "discography": "the documentation of all types of reproduced sound preserved on all types of artifacts."[12] Stevenson understood the importance of discographies in scholarly research when he commented, "Like the book and the printed word, the artifacts of recorded sound are mirrors of past decades, products of specific times, places, cultures, and subcultures. They are historical sources, but they have their own history, for they are part of the history of the very society which they document."[13]

Textual Information on Phonograph Records

At this point, the sound archivist may ask just what precisely is this textual information one can find on a phonograph record? Therefore, let us review the kind of information that a music researcher might find by examining a standard commercial disc single, that is, a 78 or 45 that has one song to a side. The researcher would examine both what is written on the label on each side and what is written in the shellac/vinyl on each side. The disc most likely will contain most of the following information:

1. **Release number:** Once a matrix (table) of all the known release numbers on the particular label is created, one has a good idea of the year and approximate month of issue of a particular phonograph record release.

2. **Master or matrix numbers:** Each side will contain a master or matrix number on the label and/or directly on the shellac or vinyl, which will tell the historian what session the song came from and, if a matrix is created, the approximate month of recording. Some master numbers also have prefixes that indicate what recording studio was used.

3. **Song title:** Surprisingly, this is not always easy to obtain, especially on rare records. Titles frequently change from the time they are listed at the time of recording to when the label is printed.

4. **Songwriter or composer:** The phonograph record is often the only place to find the name of the songwriter or composer. Of course, the name on the label is often a pseudonym for the actual songwriter, but this can be documented by researching the labels. Given the researcher's prior knowledge, he or she can also find evidence for false claims for song authorship.

5. **Publisher:** In the vernacular music business, publishers generally last longer than record labels. A publisher's name will often open up new avenues of research for a music historian. Many records of the 1940s and earlier do not include the name of the publisher, however.

6. **Licensing organization:** Commonly, when the publisher is listed, the licensing organization that distributes royalties is also listed. The two most common licensing organizations in the United States are the American Society of Composers and Performers (ASCAP) and Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI). These licensing organizations have contact names of publishers and composers in their files that music historians can use in their research.

7. **Arranger and producer:** Record labels often provide this information for these key behind-the-scenes people in the session.

8. **Artist:** This item of information is not as straightforward as it seems. The name could be a pseudonym and, as such, serves as valuable information. Sometimes the researcher might be led to a record—perhaps from an interview or from session file information—and be surprised by the appearance of a pseudonym; sometimes the discovery is wholly serendipitous as when a researcher plays a record and discovers aurally all the earmarks of the true artist (which is what happened when researchers first played Texas Slim records on King and discovered they were by famed bluesman John Lee Hooker). Highly important to jazz researchers is that many combo recordings of the 1940s and early 1950s include not only the name of the band but a list of members and the instruments they play.

9. **Dating codes:** RCA Victor records can be dated by a master number code that will give the month of release. Some other records can be dated by so-called "delta numbers" scratched in the plastic or shellac. These delta numbers come from certain West Coast pressing plants, and collectors have developed a matrix for them so they can determine month by month when a record was pressed.[14]

10. **Recording time of the record:** Beginning in the 1950s it became common to put the recording time of the record on the label to aid disc jockeys in their programming. Music researchers use the information to determine if the single version is an edited version from the album cut.

11. **City of origin:** Many smaller labels, especially in the 1940s, will give the city of origin, and sometimes even the street address. This kind of information is useful to the music researcher when trying to distinguish small companies of the same name or in trying to develop a sense of the recording activity in a particular locale.

Using these general guides lets us see how they apply to a pair of labels on phonograph records that most music historians would consider worthy of being placed in an archives. They are from small independent labels that existed briefly in Chicago during the late 1940s. There are no known textual files from these companies; thus, music researchers must examine the labels to elicit information about the artist and the company.

Ideally, every piece of the textual content that I listed above would appear on every label. That would be a researcher's dream. I chose two labels as examples of what the researcher sometimes will not find and the surprising amount of information he or she will find. For example, the Premium label lists no songwriter, an unusual omission. The Hy-Tone label shows all members of the combo that made the record and the instruments they played.

A researcher who knows what to look for in examining this record may find some obvious information, but also some information not so evident to the neophyte. In figure 1, the label gives the **company's name**, and precisely how the company renders its name: all uppercase. In reporting on the label, most music historians will make this "Hy-Tor "

Figure 1: Hy-Tone label. *Image courtesy of Tom Kelly.*

The **release number**, 28 B, indicates that this recording is the flip side of the twenty-eighth release by the company. The **master number**, UB 2530 HY, provides an idea of when this performance was recorded—late 1946 (based on previously developed matrices of the studio's output)—and where. The UB prefix indicates that the studio was Universal Broadcasting, located on Erie Street.

The **title**, "She Sticks Out Behind," is needed basic information, because sometimes in oral interviews the musician or songwriter forgets the exact title. Sometimes the title is changed from when it is recorded to when it appears on the label, another reason not to depend solely on company session records.

The **songwriter's name** indicates that the performer, Bill Martin, is talented enough to compose as well. There is often a lot of politics involved in assigning composing credits, and the label helps tell the story, if not the true identity, of the songwriter. When a researcher finds among the credits the name of a famous disc jockey or the name of the record label owner, this often indicates that songwriter credits have been appropriated.

Not only is the **artist's name** given, but there is also a bonus: the names of the band members and their instruments. This is much more common in the 1940s and early 1950s and among jazz groups than in other eras and in other forms of music.

This label gives the **producer's name**, but the term "producer" was not well-established in the 1940s. Thus, on this particular label, the researcher will find the term "supervisor" instead of "producer." As the supervisor, F. Williams (which refers to Freddie Williams, the owner of Hy-Tone) produced this session.

Last, the label gives the **city of origin**, Chicago, which can help the less knowledgeable researcher. It also helps the more experienced researcher distinguish this release from releases from other Hy-Tone labels from other cities.

Figure 2, the Premium label, lacks some essential information, but provides some information that was not found on the Hy-Tone label. The **label name** rendered in a particular font often helps the researcher distinguish the label from others of the same

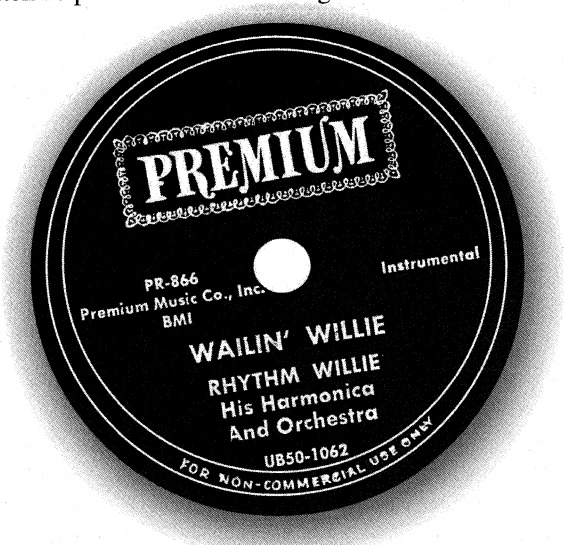

Figure 2: Premium label. *Image courtesy of Tom Kelly.*

name. The **release number**, PR-866, indicates from researchers' matrices that the record came out in December 1950.

A key piece of information on the label is the **publisher's name**. With independent labels such as Premium, the owner of the label is often the owner of the publishing company as well. Publishing companies tend to last longer than particular labels, and a publisher's name can often be traced through licensing organizations to find the principals involved in a label.

The Premium label has the virtue of listing the **licensing organization name**, Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI), another key resource in locating information about the company's owners. The **title**, "Wailin' Willie," was probably made up on the spot in the recording studio. The **artist's name**, Rhythm Willie, is obviously a stage name, but music historians have determined that the artist's birth name is Willie Hood. Sometimes the name of the songwriter will reveal the true name of the artist, but not in this case.

Again, the **master number** indicates that the recording was done at Universal Broadcasting, and the alphanumeric prefix (UB50) also gives the year (1950). A matrix developed by researchers pointed precisely to the month, September. Finally, no **city of origin** is given, but music historians would know it was from Chicago from published information in trade magazines.

Music researchers can, therefore, retrieve information from a phonograph record's textual content that can help them build a chronology of an artist's recording career, including what performances were recorded at what sessions, as well as when and where. The researcher can find out from whom the performers obtained their repertoire, what arrangers and producers assisted in the recordings, and when they were released. Many recording company histories would be impossible to imagine without access to this kind of record label documentation.

Master Numbers in Research

Sound archivists will perhaps discover that one of the most arcane elements of sound recording research is the pursuit of the master number. This number, also called the matrix number, is the designation that recording companies assign to a recorded performance they prepare for the master recording, that is, a master disc from which a metal stamper is made to be used in pressing records. Thus, each recorded performance has either a number code or an alphanumeric code that follows it through history. A master number is one of the key building blocks of recording history. These numbers appear on liner notes and on labels, and they are written in the vinyl or shellac.

Master numbers, therefore, serve as the central organizing tool of published discographies, which list each artist alphabetically and, under each artist, lists recording sessions chronologically.

The Association of Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC) has over the years devised various cataloguing schemes for sound collections, and each one includes a place to list the master number. One of the group's most notable projects was explained in a 1997 article, "Formulating Guidelines for Discographies to be Published in the *ARSC Journal*." Included in the list of ideal contents was the master number.[15] With regard to label discography, the article stated that master numbers are required and "may be the basis

of organization."[16] In the guidelines for subject discographies and performer discographies, master numbers are also required. With regard to performer discography, the article said, "We propose here that the recorded material ordinarily be arranged to display the development of the performer's career. If the discographer has access to studio logs, a list of recording sessions works well. If the performer worked in the pre-LP era, [master] numbers will provide a chronological system *even without such access*."[17]

Most casual music researchers do not know what master numbers are and make no use of them in obtaining access to recordings. Most archivists, therefore, whose repositories are limited in resources and personnel hours, may have to place limits on how much information to catalogue and might find the inclusion of master numbers expendable. And, indeed, theoretically they are. Researchers can request a record and examine it themselves for the master numbers. Many archivists would argue, however, that including the master numbers in the cataloguing would eliminate unnecessary handling of the disc, alleviating preservation concerns.[18]

Master numbers appearing on phonograph recordings can help supply the chronology where company logs (and by extension published discographies) are missing and correct misinformation in company logs. For example, a 1997 issue of *ARSC Journal* gave a report on a research project on the discography of Brunswick Records that will list all types of recordings made by Brunswick in the U.S. from 1919 to the end of 1931. The label was a premier label that recorded hillbilly, jazz, blues, ethnic, classical, and Tin Pan Alley music. The compiler, Ross Laird, reports, "for the earliest period from 1919 through to 10 February 1923 no file data seems to exist. I have used the [master number] data shown in the wax of early Brunswick Records to reconstruct a large part of the recording activity at this time."[19] What Laird said is that he constructed a matrix of information from the textual content that he pulled from phonograph records.

Three Examples of Research of Label Content

The following three examples of research work in sound archives illustrate how researchers make use of the textual content of commercial phonograph records.

Alan Balfour is an English researcher based in London. He is a technical writer in the computer industry, but he has built a reputation in the last 20 years as one of the leading blues discographers. A principal project he was involved in was helping in the compilation of Mike Leadbitter and Neil Slaven's massive discography on post-World War II blues recordings.[20] Balfour, who used primarily the National Sound Archives (NSA) in the British Library in London, explained what he had to do: "I was presented with 1,000 sheets of paper and asked to check it (smile). I used the NSA holdings to correct song titles and check master numbers. This was especially useful with regard to postwar Victors, of which the NSA possessed a remarkable collection. One cannot perform such a task as that without examining what's on the label, and, by natural curiosity, look to see what's written in the wax of a 78 or 45."[21] When Balfour made reference to examining what is "written in the wax" he was looking for the master number as written on the shellac or vinyl.

David Bianco, a reference book editor in Detroit, has written a massive annotated discographical work on Motown Records, which was famous for its soul music record-

ings of the 1960s and 1970s.[22] His principal archival source was the "Motown Collection" at the main library at Eastern Michigan University (EMU) in Ypsilanti. The collection largely consisted of 45s and LPs issued by Motown Records. Bianco did not have to listen to the records to find them valuable for his research. As he explained, "Being able to view Motown singles helped to verify titles, verify who were credited as the artists on the releases, and verify songwriting credits. I would caution though, that info on record labels is as subject to error as anything else. Seeing the 45s was also helpful in sorting out producers, as they changed frequently at Motown. In general, it was often the only way to find out who wrote and produced a particular song on an artist."[23]

Robert Campbell, a psychology professor at Clemson University, South Carolina, established the Red Saunders Research Foundation (RSRF) Web site. He put his research project on the Internet in May 1997.[24] His aim is to compile detailed annotated discographies of record labels and jazz artists that had a significant presence in Chicago in the postwar era. Principal contributors to the site along with Campbell are the author and Armin Buettner of Basel, Switzerland.[25]

The work the RSRF has done on a postwar Chicago label, Aristocrat, is particularly important and illustrates the uses that music researchers and discographers make of the textual content found on commercial recordings. The Aristocrat label is the predecessor to the famed Chess Records label. Understanding its recording history will provide a window on the activities of Chess at the dawn of its creation. Typically, however, as an independent label where company files are often missing, there are no extant company files for Aristocrat's first two years. Reported record producer Bob Porter, "I've been around tape vaults at Prestige, Savoy, Verve, and Atlantic as well as Chess, and Chess was far and away the worst organized in terms of data. Just a mess."[26]

Missing and poorly organized company files will also impact the quality of the data that show up on the published discographies as well. The most notable discography that covers Aristocrat is that of a Swiss researcher, Michel Ruppli, who compiled a massive tome, *The Chess Discography*, but because of the lack of files for the early years it is woefully incomplete and incorrect on its Aristocrat listings. Therefore, in building a discography of Aristocrat the RSRF has to use the record labels themselves. Explained Campbell, "We have used the Ruppli discography when nothing else is at hand (hard to avoid when the material has never been issued), but whenever it could be done, *collectors have inspected the physical artifacts in their collections to verify the [information] (and many corrections have been necessary as a result).*"[27]

Conclusions

Historically, sound archivists have been either oblivious to or dismissive of the notion that a commercial phonograph record might have enduring value not merely as a sound document but also as a textual document. Archivists, therefore, need to improve their knowledge of how their commercial disc collections are being used by researchers.

First, they must begin to think in terms of the importance of textual content on phonographs records in music research, but without diminishing the importance of the "sound" to researchers. It may be that most researchers will have need only for the sound content, but sound archivists will still need to manage their collections so that they can meet

the needs of those researchers who are looking for textual content. The needs of those researchers should be on the mind of the archivist when appraising phonograph records, when providing them with reference services, and when disposing of records after reformatting. My preference would be to not dispose of a record, not even if it were in pieces.

Second, sound archivists need to recognize that researching the textual content of sound recordings is neither a trivial nor a specialized or narrow activity and understand that it is essential for the kind of information scholars need for broader research on their subject. Some scholars "merely" compile discographies, but it is the discographies in turn that provide the chronology of a performer's entire recording career or a chronology of an output of a record company. This is basic building-block information that music historians need when writing biographies, record company histories, and even deeper studies that show the historical, cultural, and sociological significance of a particular musical art form.

Last, archivists need to become aware of sound archivist organizations such as the Association for Recorded Sound Collections and their publications and familiarize themselves with what is being written about sound recordings and how they are being used in research.

Sound archivists serve an invaluable function in preserving and providing access to researchers of their commercial sound collections. As managers of such collections, it is essential that they understand just how researchers use their collections. An appreciation of the importance of the textual content in commercial sound recordings should shape an archivist's approach to appraisal, cataloguing, and preservation.

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NOTES

1. A selective list of publications on the topic includes: Ellen Garrison, "Neither Fish Nor Fowl Nor Good Red Meat: Using Archival Description Techniques for Special Format Materials," *Archival Issues* 21 (1996): 61–71; Larry Holdridge, Mildred Petrie, Ted Sheldon, and Gary Thalheimer, "Disposal of Record Collections: Four Views," *ARSC Journal* 26 (1995): 52–61; Elwood McKee, "ARSC/AAA: Fifteen Years of Cooperative Research," *ARSC Journal* 20 (1989): 3–13; and "Developing and Selecting Cataloging Systems for Private Collections," *ARSC Journal* 27 (1996): 51–58; Christopher Ann Paton, "Appraisal of Sound Recordings for Archivists," *Archival Issues* 22 (1997): 117–132; "Preservation Re-Recording of Audio Recordings in Archives: Problems,

Priorities, Technologies, and Recommendations," *American Archivist* 61 (1998): 188–219; and "Whispers in the Stacks: The Problem of Sound Recordings in Archives," *American Archivist* 53 (1990): 274–280; David H. Thomas, "Cataloging Sound Recordings Using Archival Methods," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 11 (1990): 193–212; Helen P. Harrison, *The Archival Appraisal of Sound Recordings and Related Materials: A RAMP Study With Guidelines* (Paris: General Information Programme and UNISIST, 1987); David Roberts, "Managing Records in Special Formats," *Keeping Archives,* second edition, ed. Judith Ellis (Port Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: D. W. Thorpe in association with the Australian Society of Archivists Inc., 1993): 385–427; Alan Ward, *A Manual of Sound Archive Administration* (Hants, England: Gower, 1990).

2. Jerry McWilliams, *The Preservation and Restoration of Sound Recordings* (Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, 1979): 104–105.
3. Paton, "Appraisal of Sound Recordings," 129.
4. Roberts, "Managing Records," 402.
5. Ward, 109–110.
6. Ward, 156.
7. For example, see *Audio Preservation: A Planning Study: A Final Performance Report* (Rockville, Maryland: Association for Recorded Sound Collections, Associated Audio Archives Committee, 1988). McKee, "Developing and Selecting Cataloging Systems," 53–58.
8. McKee, "Fifteen Years," 3.
9. Holdridge, et al., 57.
10. Holdridge, et al., 57.
11. Tim Brooks, "An Open Letter to Discographers," *ARSC Journal* 26 (1995): 65.
12. Gordon Stevenson, "Discography: Scientific, Analytical, Historical and Systematic," *Library Trends* 21 (July 1972): 109.
13. Stevenson, 109.
14. Peter Grendysa, "Record Dating: The State of the Art," *Goldmine* (August 15, 1986): 69. The article discusses the two codes and Grendysa provides charts of both. The delta code was discovered by record collector Warren Cook in 1965.
15. Jerome F. Weber, "Formulating Guidelines for Discographies to be Published in the *ARSC Journal*," *ARSC Journal* 28 (1997): 200.
16. Weber, 204.
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20. Mike Leadbitter and Neil Slaven, *Blues Records, 1943–1970: A Selective Discography, Volume One A–K* (London: Record Information Services, 1987). Mike Leadbitter, Les Fancourt, and Paul Pelletier, *Blues Records, 1943–1970: A Selective Discography, Volume Two L–Z* (London: Record Information Services, 1994).
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26. Robert Campbell and George R. White, "The Aristocrat Label," <http://hubcap.clemson.edu/~campber/aristocrat.html> (July 17, 2000).
27. Campbell and White. Emphasis added.

Four of the Best from Our First 25 Years

THE SHAME OF THE CITIES: PUBLIC RECORDS OF THE METROPOLIS

Originally published in *Midwestern Archivist* 2:2 (1977): 27–34

BY SAM BASS WARNER, JR.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR, BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD, 2002: *Even listed in brief, Sam Bass Warner's résumé is remarkable:* Watertown Sun, *Watertown, Massachusetts, editor and publisher, 1951–1952; Massachusetts Institute of Technology-Harvard University Joint Center for Urban Studies, Cambridge, Massachusetts, research associate, 1959–1963; Harvard University, instructor, 1960–1963; Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, associate professor of history and architecture and research associate at Institute for Urban and Regional Studies, 1963–1967; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, professor of history, 1967–1972; Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, William Edwards Huntington Professor of History, 1973–1991; Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, Jack Meyerhoff Professor of Environmental Studies, 1991–present. Visiting professor of architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1977. Member of advisory council, United States National Archives, 1969–1972; member of advisory board, Center for Urban Studies, Harvard School of Education, 1975–1976, and Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, Columbia University, 1989–1992; member of national research council, Committee on Basic Research in the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1980–1982. Consultant, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1979–1980. His many books include* Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870–1900; The Private City; Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth; *and* The Urban Wilderness: A History of the American City. *His latest book is* Greater Boston: Adapting Regional Traditions to the Present.

When Lincoln Steffens' famous phrase of indictment was proposed as the title for our session* I accepted it with enthusiasm because it seemed to neatly summarize our archival problems. We have been an urban nation at least since 1920, and save a few exceptions, the official records of our municipalities are ignored, neglected or systematically destroyed. Surely a civilized concern for informing the present with the experience of the past requires at the very least the ordering of these public records.

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* This paper was presented at the 1971 Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists in San Francisco. *[The same session also featured notable papers by Howard Zinn and Patrick Quinn, both published alongside Professor Warner's article in* Midwestern Archivist *2:2 . —The Editorial Board]*

Yet the more I've thought about the problem of urban archives the more I've come to the conclusion that the public records *per se* are not the problem: the City Halls, county buildings, state and federal urban branch offices are not the place to begin, neglected though they surely are. We are the most prolific record-producing society in the history of mankind and a mere call for putting more of these records in order is an irresponsible social act. As I see it even if all the public records of our urban governments were organized into well-selected and well-managed archives I can't think urban history would improve markedly. I am, after all, an urban historian so I bring to you my concerns for the output of archives, not the concerns of archivists themselves.

The urban history problem lies in the focus and habits of both the historical and archival professions. Until this focus changes and these professions are willing to take risks to provide the kind of history that the public demands and needs, no amount of archival funding will bring a desirable public result.

Steffens' indictment is more apt than we originally imagined. He charged that the rich and comfortable of America commonly neglected their cities. They pursued their own selfish interests, if necessary purchased favors from politicians, and left the public services of sanitation, housing, transportation, health, and education, upon which the general public depended for their everyday life, to the corrupt and incompetent management of local bosses. It seems to me that historians and archivists have similarly made themselves comfortable with the classic concerns of famous politicians, leading families, reformers, and the patronage of high culture to the neglect of the essential issues that determine everyday life in American cities.

I am an enthusiastic supporter of Howard Zinn's recent revival of the ideas of the historian Carl Becker.[1] History should be a useful art, it should help people living today to understand the world they now face. I follow Zinn and Becker's lead in their endorsement of the old American tradition that the useful is the good.[2] Urban history should be useful, and so should the archives upon which professional and amateur historians depend. One need not go far to establish that our present performance is not much advanced along the path of social utility. As I worked on this paper I had before me two excellent books which attempted to put to use the current literature of urban history. The first was Dwight W. Hoover's *A Teacher's Guide to American Urban History* (Chicago, 1971); the second, Bureau of Curriculum Development, Board of Education of the City of New York, *Grade 8 Guide to Urban Growth: Challenge of a Changing Society* (New York, 1968). Both books scanned the current literature of urban history, geography, economics, and planning to find materials which would help young people get a reasonable focus on the world in which they lived. Both reveal the shortcomings of our efforts. In general the literature is very spotty over time: politics is covered in one era but neglected in another, labor comes forward in the late nineteenth century and fades in our own time, housing is either old slums or modern suburbs. Next, there is a general reform bias, suggesting that if only people voted a little more often and more carefully they would have humane cities. Finally there is a terrible gap between the leaders, institutions, and events of city life that are dealt with and their consequences for everyday life. School child, teacher, and general adult reader are entitled to say of the existing literature: "what has all *that* got to do with me?"

What I want to propose is that the historical and the archival professions consciously adopt as their guiding principle the goal of service to the public. Service with the records and interpretive histories which will help people understand the urban world in which they now live. We should say with Zinn and Becker that our job is to help every man make an intelligent history for his own personal use, and that, in so far as it is humanly possible, we abandon the pursuit of the classic subjects of American history and turn instead to the historical explanation of the major issues of our own time.

If this be our goal, then, what would be the subjects of urban history and what sort of archives would be necessary to make such a history possible? Let us begin where the public's own perceptions are. If you go about the city asking people what is important to them you will get the following kind of response, at least from the men: first, jobs and family income, second, education for the children, third, housing, fourth, health. This is an intelligent assessment of how a family survives and prospers in the modern world, and I see no reason not to adopt these almost universal priorities as our own.

Accordingly, historians and archivists of every metropolitan region ought to get together and choose one or another of these subjects as the focus of an urban archives. That is, San Francisco might establish a business archives, Detroit a labor archives, Los Angeles a housing archives, Boston an education archives, Atlanta a health archives, and so forth.

Specialization seems to me to be absolutely essential. The modern American city functions over a large metropolitan region, a region made up of many political and governmental units, so that the old local history approach which was rooted in the political boundaries of one or a few cities is bound to fail. Further, I see no likelihood of either big city or metropolitan resources being adequate to support what I would term a good all-purpose urban archives. Nor, if money were available, would it be desirable for us to propose such a consumption of public and philanthropic resources. There is insufficient variation among modern American cities to justify the repetition everywhere of the same sort of collection. A few well-managed and well-funded specialized archives which completely and aggressively cover their specialties for their own particular metropolitan region will suffice for historians to write accurate histories of the American urban experience. Finally, I have high expectations for these specialized archives and foresee a much more active and demanding role for archivists than would be compatible with the maintenance of a general urban archives.

If archivists are to escape being the prisoners of their record sources they must become aggressive collectors of current as well as past material. As Howard Zinn pointed out in his address at "The Archivist and the New Left" session at the 1970 SAA Annual Meeting, our current document sources do not represent the dissidents, they underrepresent the experience of ordinary people, and they hide official mistakes and unfair treatment. To combat this bias the archivist must become a historical reporter for his own time. I agree with Howard that we must seek the records and papers of the Panthers, Post Office strikers, welfare mothers, anti-school-bussing pickets, and so forth. Such people should also be interviewed and their responses taped. If the local newspaper hasn't photographed them, the archivist should take their pictures.

There is a sound political and social science reason for adding this task to the archival duties. Politically such actions restore the balance of the archives. From a social science

point of view such movements of protest—whether they be from the right or the left, whether they be riots, strikes, shoot-outs, or angry protests—reveal the latent conflicts in our highly organized society. When a group of mothers, homeowners, unemployed blacks, prisoners, or disgusted truck drivers protest, they evidence the stored and generally repressed feelings of anger and frustration latent in the society. To record these people's actions, their ideas and publications, is to make available to the future the evidence of questions not asked in the surveys, of people not elected to public office, of those outside the official records of unions, trade associations, and political parties. Most Americans, most of the time live lives of quiet desperation, as Thoreau said; it is only in these small, often obscure and unattractive outbreaks, that we can discover the sources and content of that despair.

To this active collection and interviewing of present persons and events I would add two further archival tasks: sampling and photography. A metropolitan region embraces the experience of millions and some of this experience is recorded in giant record systems. The birth and death records, the school and hospital records, credit union files, welfare dossiers and the like cover large segments of the population. It seems to me that archivists and specialists in demography, health, education, and other subjects should form committees to establish sampling procedures for the preservation of historical series selected from these massive sources. If Rochester were the seat of an urban health archives then that archives should establish and maintain a sample which would tell as completely as possible the health experience of that region; if the St. Louis archives were concerned with employment then there should be a statistical panel of families which would tell of the work experience of that region. Each specialty and its associated record sources have unique sampling problems; there are as well issues of confidentiality which must be mastered, but such complexities can be dealt with by sustained scholarly effort.

Finally, many of the written records of an archives require photographs to enhance their full meaning. To get a sense of working class life in a city for any time period is now an immensely difficult task. To remedy such shortcomings, each specialized archives should both systematically collect and *take* dated and fully labeled photographs portraying the commonplace manifestations of its particular subject matter. The classification system of the Library of Congress for the Farm Security Administration photographs can serve as a model of how to begin. We need systematic photographic reporting of people at work, children and teachers in schools, vernacular architecture, women and children in their home activities, and so forth.

I think if one views archives and archivists in such a light then the old goals of extending a local history archives to cover a metropolitan region is clearly unfeasible. The task is just too large. Finally, some of the four subjects of popular priority are immensely difficult to handle. Employment and income cover a range of issues reflected in such documents as business records of executive decisions, personnel and engineering studies, union files, public employment studies and programs, Chamber of Commerce and bank attempts to attract new firms to the city, working conditions in large factories and offices and in the thousands of small shops of the city. Archivists, historians, and social scientists will clearly have to experiment with more than one form of archives to build a workable record in such a complex subject. Some of these experi-

ments will surely fail either for lack of funds or lack of use. As professionals we are going to have to take chances on collecting the wrong material or arranging it in the wrong way. As things now stand, history is unique among the social sciences in that every scholarly effort is called a success—after all, every effort produces a *history.* So too with archives, every collection in time becomes an *archive.* But this easy definition is our irresponsibility: by freeing ourselves from any meaningful definition of failure we call irrelevance success.

Now as professionals we do know that more is involved in the popular issues of jobs, education, housing, and health than just archives so named. I would hope that in the next decade a few cities would organize themselves specifically around each of the named topics, but there will be need for additional specialties too. Despite the public's well-deserved distrust of politicians, we know that political and administrative decisions determine much of the life and development of our cities. We will need archives of urban politics. Such archives will have to be depositories for all official materials, papers of the elite, and voting records just as we now assemble them. Such collections should also include the materials of the reporting archivists who seek interviews and papers from dissident groups, lawyers and businessmen who negotiate major contracts, and the specialists such as engineers, and consultants who provided the rationale or justification for official decisions.

Transportation and communications are obvious topics for the specialized urban archives. Such collections should include not only the background to official decision-making, for example, public highway and utility hearings, protests and petitions by citizens, but also such records as will allow a follow-up assessment of the consequences of these decisions: the daily pollution indexes, the telephone traffic statistics, the flows of cars and trucks, changes in land use and ecology. One of the very important needs in the modern city is the information for the assessment of the successes and failures of past projects and programs. For instance, for whom and in what ways are Los Angeles' freeways a success? Who will San Francisco's rail system serve and what will be the consequences of this alternative investment? Such issues can only be evaluated by long-time series analysis, and the long-time series is peculiarly the business of the historian and the archivist.

Finally, I think of a whole list of specialties, each one of which casts an important light on the sub-cultures of our cities: the blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, Poles, Jews, Irish, Germans, WASPs. An archives of high culture and another of popular culture, and archives on the family and one on women, should also be included among these specialized archives.

To conclude, the basic strategy I propose to deal with the shame of the cities is as follows:

1. That historians, archivists, social scientists, and librarians adopt as their goal providing city dwellers of America with the knowledge necessary to place their present experience in a historical context and the knowledge necessary to assess the politics, programs, plans, and decisions of the present in the light of the past.

2. That we accept the idea that, with few exceptions, the modern city cannot be comprehended by its political boundaries and that urban archives should be metropolitan in scope.

3. To meet these objectives, the archivists and historians of each metropolitan area ought to meet together, canvass the potential of present collections, assess the particular resources and interests of their area and decide to concentrate their efforts on one, or in the case of very large metropolises, a few specialties.

4. The specialized archives should be built very aggressively and self-consciously with a great deal of emphasis on collecting material from groups normally left out, and on reporting, taping, photographing and systematic sampling of the present by the archives staff.

I realize that I haven't dealt with the problems of the storage, management, and access to the legal records of the many jurisdictions that make up any American metropolis, nor have I touched upon the coordination of such specialized urban archival efforts with existing municipal, state and national archives. There are and would be, of course, important requirements for cooperation to link the new archives with the local, state and federal network. These seem to me issues which archivists would be more qualified to discuss than I. The point I want to leave with you is that archivists and historians must leave their narrow professionalism and seek more directly to serve the needs of the American urban public. There is a long-standing urban crisis in the United States and we, like all urban institutions and professionals, are part of the problem and not as yet part of the solution.

NOTES

1. Howard Zinn, *The Politics of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970): pp. 17, 288–289, 291–292, and 306.
2. Warner also argued for "useful history" in his address "The New Demand for Relevance in American History" at the Conference on the National Archives and Urban Research, 1970. See Jerome Finster (ed.), *The National Archives and Urban Research* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1974): pp. 6 ff.

UNDERSTANDING AND USING EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY ACCOUNT BOOKS

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BY CHRISTOPHER DENSMORE

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD, 2001: Account Books and the "Business" of Archives

Archives are in the authenticity business. We preserve the story of the past, unmediated by the constructions of inevitably present minded academics. Account books are records unmediated even by their "authors." Where a letter writer or a diarist, even one writing on official business, is selective, the account-book keeper is simply recording transactions. If it involved a debit or credit, in it goes—the price of apples as well as the price of 50 acres of prime farmland. While I have encountered many worthless account books, which do not justify the space they occupy, others tell stories about the daily lives of otherwise invisible and unknown figures from the past. This is the stuff of social history.

When I wrote this article, my conception of the likely end user for account books was the graduate student, professor, or local historian who had or could be taught (often by archivists) the skills necessary to interpret source documents. I have become increasingly aware of the importance of other consumers, our ultimate end users who will learn about the past, not from formal courses or reading the books of academics, but from visiting museums and historic sites, surfing the Web or watching documentaries on PBS or the History Channel. There is a decidedly limited audience for academic books, but a vast and growing audience for history. Archivists are increasingly finding themselves engaged with the makers of documentary films, museum interpreters, and docents and architectural preservationists. Archivists are in the authenticity business. The stories of daily life are sometimes better told in business records than in correspondence or diaries.

I became an archivist in part because primary documents, particularly those artless documents of record—account books, census schedules, and minutes of meetings—tell what is to me a better, more direct, and more authentic story than I could find in the books I studied in graduate school or in most literature. Archivists get to work with the "fun stuff." I currently have a volunteer transcribing a Quaker produced census of the

African-American population of Philadelphia in 1847 into a database. The format of the census was to systematically collect forty-six different bits of data. It was an intentionally rationalistic survey instrument, intended only to produce a statistical report about how many people owned property, how many rented, and how many received public assistance; what their occupations and rates of pay were; how many children worked and how many were in school. It was certainly not intended to be read as a book. But each entry tells a story of a person and how that person fared in life. The teacher who made $300 per year and lived what appears a middle-class existence in his own house had one story; his neighbor who made $3.00 per week vending pepper-pot soup on the street corner and lived in a rented room had another. It is through these records—census schedules and account books—that we preserve the history of the lives of ordinary people.

Because of the renewed interest in local and community studies, archivists and manuscript curators are reassessing the informational value of business and institutional records. Account books and other business records, originally preserved because of their association with an individual or the early years of a community, or as documentation of economic history, are often the most significant surviving records of the early years of a community. Frequently, they constitute the only non-governmental record of the lives of many ordinary people. In the early nineteenth century, account books were kept by farmers, artisans, and laborers, as well as by merchants and manufacturers. While not as readily intelligible as diaries, letters, newspapers, and other forms of prose documentation, account books kept by individuals and small businesses may be easily interpreted once their basic format is understood.

Account books are primarily records of financial obligations. Many persons who neither wrote letters nor kept diaries had to keep their accounts in a reasonably accurate and systematic manner. As records of debts payable and receivable, account books were saved when other paper records were used to light fires or to insulate the attic. Even after the death of its original creator, an account book was often preserved to settle the estate.

It is difficult to estimate the percentage of the population that kept account books, but the number of surviving examples in manuscript collections suggests that such records were common. Given the prevalence of barter, particularly in the economy of rural America, it is hard to imagine how any farmer or artisan could have functioned without a bookkeeping system. Since instructions for bookkeeping were often included in arithmetic texts, a rudimentary knowledge of accounting methods was within the grasp of anyone with a common school education or an understanding of simple arithmetic.[1] Examples of account books kept by persons who were barely literate attest to the importance of this form of record keeping.

The following description of bookkeeping as practiced by individuals and small businesses is based on an examination of about 30 sets of account books used in western New York and southern Ontario from 1800 to 1850 and of arithmetic textbooks from the same period. These forms of keeping accounts are typical of those used in eighteenth century America, and they survived well past the 1850s, particularly in rural areas.

The system recommended to "the generality of Mechanics, Farmers, Retail Merchants, &c." was single entry bookkeeping.[2] Two books were required: a book of original entry called a "day book" in which transactions were entered in chronological order, and a "ledger" in which transactions were entered under individual accounts as debits ("Dr.") and credits ("Cr."). The terms "waste book," "day book," and "journal" were sometimes used interchangeably. A waste book is simply the rough form of the day book; "journal" usually refers to the book used in double entry bookkeeping to separate transactions into debits and credits.

The more elaborate method of keeping accounts by double entry is not likely to be encountered in the records of small businesses and will not be dealt with here.

The following examples of day book and ledger entries are taken from *Preston's Treatise on Bookkeeping* (1838):[3]

MECHANICS' AND RETAILERS' DAY-BOOK, OR JOURNAL.

Utica, April 1, 1831.

1	A. B. Johnson	Dr.	
	To 1 Mahogany Table	$18 50	
	„ 6 Fancy Chairs .....at $1.50.....	9 00	
	„ 1 Common Cherry Table	7 75	35 25
	2d.		
2	T. M. Shapley	Cr.	
	By 5 lbs. Brown Sugar .....at 12 cts.....$0 60		
	„ 4 „ Loaf do.....„ 19 „ 0 76		
	„ 1 „ Hyson Skin Tea 0 83		
	„ 1 „ Bohea „ 0 62		2 81

Figure 1

6 MECHANICS' AND RETAILERS' DAY-BOOK, OR JOURNAL.

Utica, May 8, 1831.

2	T. M. Shapley Dr. To Cash *in full* (per Receipt)		2 81

1 LEGER.

Dr. A. B. JOHNSON. Cr.

Month	day.	Articles.	P.	$	cts.	Month	day.	Articles.	P.	$	cts.
1831											
Ap'l	1	To Sundries....	1	35	25						

LEGER. 2

Dr. T. M. SHAPLEY. Cr.

Month	day.	Articles.	P.	$	cts.	Month	day.	Articles.	P.	$	cts.
1831						1831					
May	8	To Cash.....	6	2	81	April	2	By Sundries...	1	2	81

Figure 2

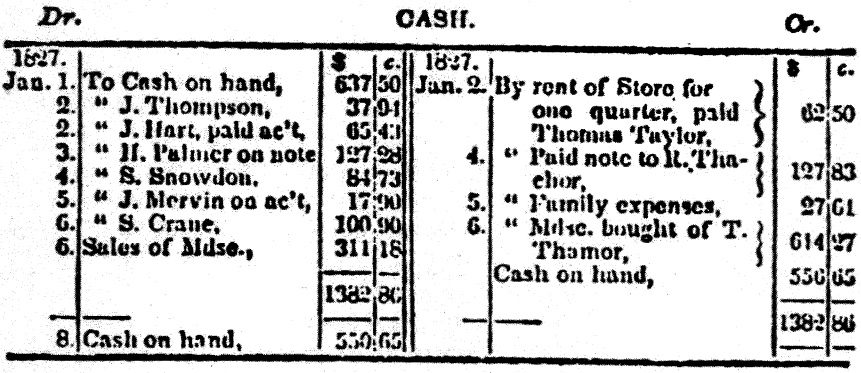
On April 1, 1831, the merchant sells several pieces of furniture to A. B. Johnson. The entry in the day book is quite specific, giving the number, type, and price of each item sold. This detail is necessary because "if any dispute happens in trade, this book is produced as the principal voucher; every transaction recorded in it should be stated with care and accuracy."[4] The sum of $35.25 is posted to the left (debit) side of Johnson's account on page 1 of the ledger. Rather than repeat the information already recorded in the day book, the entire transaction is summarized by the word "sundries." The following day, April 2, the merchant purchases $2.81 worth of tea and sugar from T. M. Shapley. The amount is posted to the right (credit) side of Shapley's account on page 2 of the ledger. On May 8, 1831, the merchant records a payment in cash in the amount of $2.81 to T. M. Shapley in the day book and posts the amount on the left (debit) side of Shapley's account. Since the debit and credit sides are equal, the account is settled, and two parallel lines are drawn below it to indicate that it has balanced. The Johnson account remains unbalanced.

Accounts were started in the ledger on the first available page. When there was no more room on a page to continue an account, the debit and credit sides were totaled and the sums posted to a new page. When there were no more available pages in a volume, a new volume was started. A single account might be carried through several ledgers—and many years—without being settled or balanced. Since ledger accounts were in no logical order, there was usually an alphabetical index with page references at the front or back of the volume.

Bookkeeping instructions usually recommended keeping both a day book and a ledger, but in practice the functions of the two books could be combined in a single volume. In this system transactions were entered directly under specific accounts, thereby eliminating the day book. This left no chronological record of overall activities, although the entries in each account were usually dated. Since the primary purpose of single entry bookkeeping was to record indebtedness, a chronological record was not essential. The form was well suited to farmers and small artisans, and was also used by some retail merchants.[5]

The primary purpose of the day book and ledger was to keep track of continuing financial obligations, money owed or due. A merchant might or might not also record his *cash* sales in the day book and ledger, depending on his individual preference or needs.

Cash books were kept by businesses in which it was important to know the amount of money on hand at any given time or in partnerships in which it was necessary to keep a record of the total assets of the firm. The example below comes from Roswell Smith's *Practical and Mental Arithmetic* (1845):[6]



Dr. CASH. Cr.

1827.		$	c.	1827.		$	c.
Jan. 1.	To Cash on hand,	637	50	Jan. 2.	By rent of Store for one quarter, paid Thomas Taylor,	62	50
2.	" J. Thompson,	37	01				
2.	" J. Hart, paid ac't,	65	43				
3.	" H. Palmer on note	127	83	4.	" Paid note to R. Thachor,	127	83
4.	" S. Snowdon,	84	73				
5.	" J. Mervin on ac't,	17	00	5.	" Family expenses,	27	61
6.	" S. Crane,	100	00	6.	" Misc. bought of T. Thamor,	614	27
6.	Sales of Misc.,	311	18		Cash on hand,	556	65
		1382	86			1382	86
8.	Cash on hand,	556	65				

Figure 3

Cash on hand and cash received are entered on the debit (Dr.) side; cash paid out is entered on the credit (Cr.) side.

Records of cash receipts and expenditures were occasionally kept by individuals who were careful enough or curious enough to keep track of their personal finances. The example below comes from the back pages of a ledger book kept by John Anderson, a farmer from Pompey, New York.[7]

1842 an account of money paid out

Dec. 26	Paid the taxes twelve dollars & ninty one cents	$12.91
Jan. 29	Paid walter pease one hundred dollars in cash on note that he held against the estate	$100.00
Feb. 10	Paid (name unclear) two dollars and seventy cents for dressing cloath	
Feb. 14	and carding wool	$2.70
Feb. 15	Paid thirty five cents too hanible case for donation	35
Feb. 19	Paid fifteen cents for some pie and chease	15
Feb. 20	Paid melia brattle one shilling for cutting a dress for mary	12
March 9	Paid ten shillings for pulling teeth	1.25
March 16	Paid one shilling for waying hay	12
March 16	Paid five cents gatage	5

Figure 4

The account reads somewhat like a diary. Between December 26 and March 16, Anderson paid out $112.91 on his estate, but only $4.74 for other cash purchases. The small number of cash purchases does not mean that Anderson was impoverished, but that he probably paid for most goods and services by bartering with his neighbors and with the local merchant rather than by paying cash.

The following examples of single entry bookkeeping are taken from an account book found in central New York which contains entries dating from 1828 to 1845, with a few later notations to 1866.[8] The book is typical of the early nineteenth century: mottled pasteboard covers, a leather spine with a label reading "LEGER" (sic), and the pages ruled for accounts. Inscribed on the inside front cover and the back pages are memoranda in the owner's idiosyncratic but serviceable spelling:

> "The Dol Mair went to Hors the 14th of the 6th Mo. 1843 the 25th of the 7th Mo went to Hors again"
>
> "To one quart of Alchall 1/4 of gum myrrh and 1/2 ounce of African caen [cayenne?] or an ounce of the common"

Unfortunately, the owner did not include his name and address on the first page as recommended by most texts on bookkeeping. Some of the accounts dated 1837 to 1845 refer to people and places in Wayne County, New York.

The first 37 pages, which cover 1828 to 1835, contain ledger entries. The existence of a corresponding day book, now lost, may be inferred by the page references in the entries for "5Mo 18" (May 18) and "12Mo" (December) and by the fact that sums rather than details of the transactions appear in the entries.

P. 6		William Howard		
1828			1828	
5Mo18	P. 35	0.16.0	12Mo15 32/	1.12.0
10Mo		0. 3.6	By Cash in Full	0.15.6
12Mo	P. 59	1. 8.0		
		2. 7.6		2. 7.6

Figure 5

In this case, the ledger is little more than a list of names of persons with whom the owner of the account book did business. We know that William Howard owed two pounds, seven shillings and sixpence—about six dollars—and paid his debt in cash, but without the corresponding day book we do not know what goods or services were sold.

All but four of the earlier accounts were settled in 1834 or 1835 by cash in full or a "du bil" (due bill); there are no further entries until 1837. Since none of the names that appear in the earlier accounts are found in the 1837–1845 accounts, it can be assumed that between 1835 and 1837 the owner of the account book moved to Wayne County, New York. Although it would not be unusual to find that the account book had passed into the hands of another person (usually an heir or business partner), in this case the handwriting remains the same for both sets of entries.

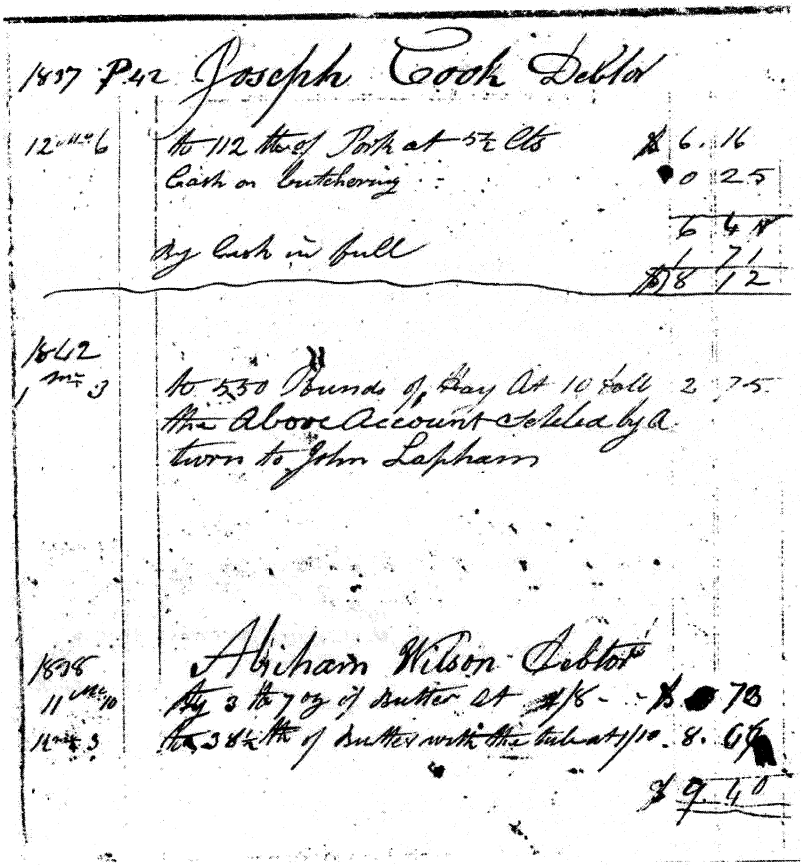
The accounts for 1837 to 1845 are also kept in ledger format, but there is no evidence of a corresponding day book. Since the information that would normally have been recorded in the day book is recorded in the ledger entry, these entries provide a much more detailed picture of the activities of the owner of the account book than the earlier entries.

P. 39	Joseph Cook Debitor			Credit	
1837	To 5 bushels Wheat	$7.50	1837	By 2 Bushels Buckwheat at 6/	1.50
				By Cash in Full	6.00
					7.50
9Mo.	To 2 Bushels wheat lent		1838 12Mo5	By Butchering hogs	1.00
	To 1 tun of Hay at $7.00	7.00		Wheat 2 Bushels returned	
			1839 6Mo18	By Shearing sheap 4½ days	6.00
	Settled this 4th of 8Mo. 1839				$7.00

Figure 6

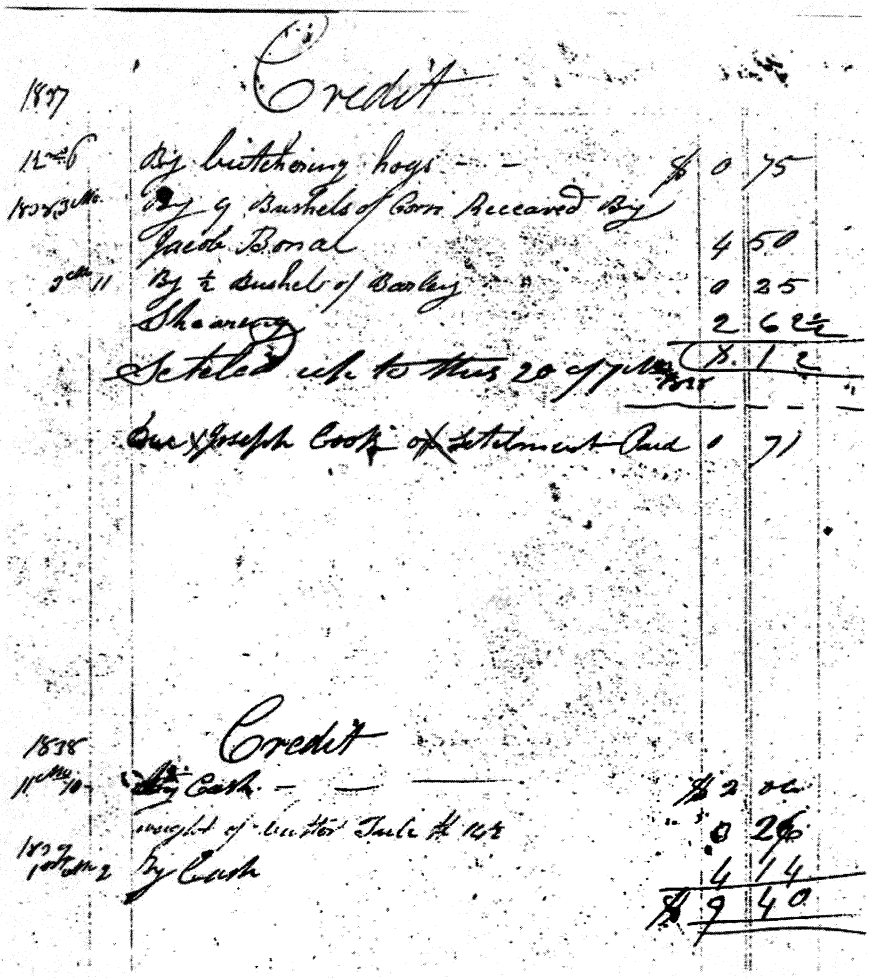
P. 42	Joseph Cook Debitor			Credit	
1837			1837		
12Mo6	To 112 lbs Pork at 5½	$6.16	12Mo6	By butchering hogs	0.75
	Cash on butchering	0.25	1838		
		6.41	3Mo.	By 9 Bushels corn recieved by Jacob Bonal	4.50
	Cash in full	1.71	3Mo11	By ½ Bushel barley	0.25
		$8.12		Shearing	2.62
				Settled up to this 20th of 7 Mo. 1838	8.12

Figure 7



Account with Joseph Cook, 1837–1838, page 42 of the Wayne County, New York, account book.

Figure 8



Account with Joseph Cook, 1837–1838, page 42 of the Wayne County, New York, account book.

Figure 9

The first transaction, entered on page 39, is for the sale of five bushels of wheat to Joseph Cook which he paid for with buckwheat and cash. In a second transaction, also on page 39, a ton of hay is traded to Cook in exchange for his services in butchering hogs and shearing sheep. Also included are the loan and return of two bushels of wheat, price unspecified.

A third set of transactions, entered on page 42, begins on "12th month 6th" (December 6), 1837. The book's owner owes Joseph Cook 75 cents for butchering, and Cook owes him the value of 112 pounds of pork at 5 1/2 cents a pound, as well as 25 cents in

cash. Next March (3Mo), Cook is credited for $4.50, this time for wheat delivered to a third party, Jacob Bonal, and another 25 cents for barley. Later Cook shears sheep for $2.62 and switches from being a debtor to a creditor. The book's owner settles the account on July 20 by paying Cook $1.71 in cash.

Cook and the owner of the account book have bartered goods, services, and cash. The total amount put up on each side is $22.62; a combined total of $45.24 changes hands. Adding the cost of the borrowed wheat, estimated at $1.50 per bushel, another $3.00 is added to each side for a grand total of $51.24 exchanged. Of the total amount, only $7.96 is in cash (about 15%); the remainder is composed of bartered goods and services.

W. T. Baxter, professor of accounting at the London School of Economics, made an extensive investigation of eighteenth century American accounts in connection with his study of business careers of the Hancock family of Massachusetts. This led him to describe the system illustrated in the Cook account as "bookkeeping barter." This form of trade survived in America long after its demise in Europe but was ultimately replaced by "one way flow," in which paper and metallic currency were readily available and payment in kind was no longer necessary. Under the system of bookkeeping barter, a merchant could not easily distinguish his customers from his suppliers. The same person who purchased his manufactured goods provided him with commodities for resale to his suppliers.[9]

In bookkeeping barter, foods function as "commodity money." They have an agreed upon value, usually related to their market price. In the account book discussed above, wheat has the value of $1.50 per bushel, buckwheat is $0.75, and barley is $0.50. The price of hay, on the other hand, tended to be seasonal, running from $5.00 per ton in the early fall to $7.50 per ton in the late winter. Although some of the grain traded in the Cook account may have been consumed at home, most was probably traded or sold to a local merchant who shipped it to the flour mills in Rochester, New York.

The earlier accounts, 1828 to 1835, were kept mainly in pounds, shillings, and pence, with only a few scattered items priced in dollars and cents. In the later accounts, 1837 to 1845, the totals are generally, but not always, in dollars and cents, but the cost per item is often expressed in shillings and pence. The use of shillings and pence persisted in some western New York account books through the 1850s, though the system of decimal currency had replaced state currencies in the 1790s. Arithmetic texts published prior to 1850 often included tables and instructions for converting the various state currencies to "Federal money" and *vice versa*.[10]

Account books kept by single entry are not difficult to identify and understand. However, it may require a page-by-page examination of each volume to determine how the book was used and whether it is complete in itself or part of a larger set. A single volume may have been used by more than one generation of a family, at more than one location, and for more than one business. Some account books were used to record any significant information not entered in the family Bible, as illustrated by the following description of a volume in the Cornell Department of Manuscripts and University Archives:

> BADGER FAMILY. Record Book, 1843–1883. 1 vol. Includes legal, farm, and household accounts; daily weather records; inventory of farm

property; directions for making medical and household preparations and treating animal and human diseases.
Painted Post, Steuben County.[11]

Private account books may also include "public" records. The account book of James W. Stevens, now in the collections of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, is a case in point. In addition to Stevens's personal accounts, the book includes his accounts as the county clerk of Genesee County (which at that time included all of New York west of the Genesee River) from the formation of the county in 1802 until 1810.[12]

Sets of volumes must be examined to determine the relationship among the different volumes. If the entries in a volume are in chronological order, it is probably a day book or a cash book; if the debit and credit columns are totaled periodically or at the foot of each page, it is probably a cash book. A day book should have a corresponding ledger. One must check the day book for marks which indicate that the entries were posted to the ledger: "x" marks, two short parallel lines, or a page reference. One must also check the day book to determine whether it includes both cash and credit transactions. An account book that is arranged in ledger format with complete entries, no use of the word "sundries," and no page references to the day book may be complete in itself. However, since one could refer to the day book by the date of the ledger entries, page references were not essential and their absence does not exclude the possibility that a day book may have existed. Occasionally, a single volume will be found with day book entries in the front half and ledger entries in the back.

Double entry bookkeeping is recognizable by the fact that each transaction is entered at least twice as equal debit and credit entries and by the use of various "real" accounts (e.g., property, merchandise) and "imaginary" accounts (e.g., stock, profit and loss, interest, commission, exchange), while single entry bookkeeping generally uses only personal (name) and cash accounts. Although it requires some time to learn double entry bookkeeping, it is not particularly difficult to recognize its forms.

While a complete set of account books is most valuable, fragmentary sets or single volumes may also have considerable research value, depending on format and on the nature of the business. In cases in which the day book survives but the ledger does not, it is still possible to reconstruct key accounts with some accuracy. In researching the activities of a craftsman or the life of a farmer, detail and a chronological approach are most important, and the absence of a ledger is not critical. In researching the operations of retail merchants or larger manufacturers, summary information about the total scope of the enterprise is more important, and the value of the ledger is much greater. The ledger facilitates research about those with whom the creator of the records did business. One might not be particularly interested in the goods sold by merchant Smith, for example, but one might be interested in the type of goods and services bartered to merchant Smith by his many customers.[13]

The importance of the ledger without the related day books depends on its content. Earlier ledgers tend to have detailed entries, often as complete as those in the day book. However, where the ledger entries are merely summarized, or where the only information brought over from the day book is the page number of the original entry and the sum involved, the ledger constitutes little more than a list of people with whom a

particular firm or individual did business, and its research value is minimal without other supporting documentation.

The amount of detail necessary to catalog an account book will vary according to the repository's needs and resources, but even basic information—name of owner, dates, location, and type of business—cannot be accepted as accurate until the entire volume has been checked. Books clearly labeled on the spine or on the front page for one purpose may have actually been used for quite another. Account books need to be described with the same care used for letters or diaries, for a researcher is unlikely to look through a pile of unidentified volumes.

No record is useful unless it is understandable. While modern financial records require an understanding of sophisticated accounting methods, most nineteenth century account books kept by individuals or small businesses can be read by anyone who studies the simple instructions for single entry bookkeeping found in many contemporary arithmetic texts. It would be helpful for repositories that collect early nineteenth century records to have such a text available. Arithmetic texts are also useful for explaining the reduction of currencies and problems of measurement no longer taught in schools.

Account books document the lives of common people. Of the 50 names represented in the 1838 to 1845 accounts of the farmer from Wayne County, it is very unlikely that more than a small fraction are represented by surviving manuscripts. Supporting information is more likely to be gathered from public records—census, land and probate records, tax lists, and poll lists.

In addition to documenting the widespread practice of bookkeeping barter, account books have considerable information value. From them can be derived biographies and autobiographies of individuals who were involved in a complex economic and social relationship. They provide information about the production and sale of farm products and manufactured goods, the availability and cost of manufactured goods, the rates and wages of labor, as well as seasonal and yearly price changes. A study of names often reveals patterns of ethnic and/or religious business relationships. Although account book entries that detail everyday economic activities are prosaic in form, they often describe the daily existence of the common people more graphically and fully than do letters, diaries, or newspapers. When their format and meaning are fully understood, account books are rich documentary sources.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR, 2001: *Christopher Densmore, Curator, Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, received his archival training from F. Gerald Ham at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in 1973 and, after working briefly at Cornell University, joined the University Archives at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1974, becoming its Director in 1995. He joined Friends Historical Library in February 2001. Densmore has also served as Chair of the Lake Ontario Archives Conference, Chair of the SAA Description Section, Chair of the Canadian Friends Historical Association and is on the Board of the Friends Historical Association and the Conference of Quaker Historians and Archivists. In addition to this article, his writings have appeared in several journals. He is the author of* Red Jacket: Iroquois Orator and

Diplomat *(Syracuse, 1999) and a coeditor of* Quaker Crosscurrents: Three Hundred Years of the New York Yearly Meetings *(Syracuse, 1995).*

NOTES

1. At least 25 arithmetic textbooks by American authors published before 1850 included instructions for bookkeeping; see Harry C. Bentley and Ruth S. Leonard, *Bibliography of Works on Accounting by American Authors* (Boston: H. C. Bentley, 1934): pp. iv–v.
2. Nicholas Pike, *A New and Complete System of Arithmetic,* 5th ed., rev. by Chester Dewey (Troy, New York: William S. Parker and Sons, 1832): p. 484.
3. Lyman Preston, *Preston's Treatise on Book-keeping* (New York: Robinson, Pratt and Co., 1838): pp. 19–21, 29.
4. William Kinne, *A Short System of Practical Arithmetic,* 2nd ed. (Hallowell, Maine: Ezekial Goodale, 1809): 137.
5. For mention of this form being used by merchants of the Midwest, see Lewis E. Atherton, "The Cataloging and Use of Western Mercantile Records," *Library Quarterly* 8 (1938): 194. The format is recommended in Pike, *A New and Complete System of Arithmetic,* 5th ed., p. 505, and in *Preston's Treatise*, p. 5.
6. Roswell C. Smith, *Practical and Mental Arithmetic* (Auburn, New York: H. and J. C. Ivison, 1845): p. 280.
7. Account book of John Anderson, Pompey, New York, 1836–1849, Special Collections, University of Rochester.
8. Account Book, Macedon Center (?), Wayne County, New York, 1828–1845, in possession of author.
9. William T. Baxter, *House of Hancock* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1945): pp. 17–24; idem, "Credit, Bills and Bookkeeping in a Simple Economy," in William T. Baxter, ed., *Studies in Accounting* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1950): pp. 31–48.
10. In New York currency, 8 shillings (8/) equaled one dollar in "Federal money." There were 12 pence in a shilling and 20 shillings in a pound.
11. *Collection of Regional History and the University Archives: Report of the Curator and Archivist,* 1958–1962 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1962): p. 27.
12. Account Book of James W. Stevens, Genesee County, New York, 1802–1828, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society; the problem of public records in private account books is mentioned in Thornton W. Mitchell, ed., *Norton on Archives: The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archival and Records Management* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975): p. 35.
13. For examples of studies using account books to document craftsmen and their products, see Charles F. Hummell, *With Hammer in Hand: The Dominy Craftsmen of East Hampton, New York* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1968): pp. 215–243, 351–406, and Margaret Berwind Schiffer, *Furniture and Its Makers of Chester County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966): pp. 63–68, 185–188, 224–226, 232–235. Other examples of studies that relied heavily on information from early account books include: Paul D. Converse, "How a Family Lived in the 1830's," *Current Economic Comment* (February 1950): 3–11; John Peter DeYoe, "From Yankee Cobbler to Middlebury Bookseller: Jonathan Hagar's Middle Years, 1799–1820," *Vermont History* 37 (1969): 13–29; David E. Schob, *Hired Hands and Plow Boys: Farm Labor in the Midwest, 1815–1860* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1975); and Pearl Wilson, "Consumer Buying in Upper Canada, 1791–1840," *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records* 36 (1944): 33–40. See also A. C. Littleton and B. S. Yamey, eds., *Studies in the History of Accounting* (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, 1956); Francis X. Blouin, Jr., "A New Perspective on the Appraisal of Business Records: A Review," *American Archivist* 42 (1979): 312–320; Arthur H. Cole, "Business Manuscripts: Collection, Handling, and Cataloging," *Library Quarterly* 8 (1938): 93–114; James M. McCabe, "Early Ledgers and Account Books: A Source for Local Vermont History," *Vermont History* 37 (1969): 5–12; and Arthur J. Ray, "The Early Hudson's Bay Company Account Books as Sources for Research: An Analysis and Assessment," *Archivaria* 1 (1975–76): 3–38.

BUYING QUARTER INCH HOLES: PUBLIC SUPPORT THROUGH RESULTS

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BY ELSIE T. FREEMAN

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD, 2001: *When I wrote this article some 17 years ago, it was part of an ongoing mission to convince my colleagues that public relations and outreach were core functions of archival work, just as were collection development, arrangement, description, and reference work. I argued, sometimes more zealously than wisely, that public relations and outreach could be approached as systematically as more traditional jobs, and that they were probably more essential to the health and welfare of an archives, because of their visibility, than everyday chores. And, happily, they could be made a part of those chores. I made converts, but many fewer than I thought we, as a profession, needed.*

Times, not to mention funding, demographics, or accidents of fortune, change. With wry satisfaction I listened a few months ago to a story told me by a colleague who teaches in a major university's archives management program. She had assigned one of my articles, perhaps this one, to her graduate students. They had read and discussed it with due gravitas until, finally, one student observed that this was a fine article, but why did they have to read it? Didn't everyone know that archivists had to do all of this to survive?

Some know it, but others don't. Some archives management courses still put these very public functions at the end of the curriculum, if they are mentioned at all, rather than explaining their importance and showing how they can be integrated with traditional work. Many archives managers remain passive, waiting for trumpets to sound, for the public to rush the doors with questions or collections. Many more have become drunk with technology, forgetting that, though it has revolutionized internal communication and daily functions, it is not a substitute for public interaction.

My first boss in this business, William Matheson, a wise and charming man who was then rare books and manuscripts librarian at Washington University, and later head of Rare Books at the Library of Congress, put it well: "If you don't let people know what you've got [and what it can do for them] you're done for." This article was then, and still is, part of that admonition.

ABSTRACT: Archivists must learn, specifically and accurately, who uses their holdings; a few individuals and institutions are now examining this question. Archivists must also learn what users produce with their research and how these products affect our personal and public lives. Four methods for ascertaining this information are suggested. Finally, armed with information about clients and results, archivists can reach new user constituencies, affect the general public's perception of the archives, and influence those who underwrite and support archival activity. The writer provides suggestions for undertaking this outreach.

Theodore Leavitt, a widely published and quoted professor of marketing at the Harvard Business School, reflects in his book, *The Marketing Imagination*, on why people buy. It is not things they buy, Leavitt says, but solutions. Or, as the storekeeper put it when he explained why people buy quarter inch drill bits, "They don't buy quarter inch bits. They buy quarter inch holes."[1] That premise informs this essay: people do not buy possibilities; they buy results. They do not want to know what an archives contains, or what archivists do. They want solutions to problems. They want quarter inch holes, not quarter inch bits.

As the Society of American Archivists Task Force on Archives and Society (TFAS) develops the techniques and literature we need to turn our faces outward toward the public, we must confront certain professional issues we have traditionally avoided. First, we must establish the technical and educational standards which any group calling itself a profession must have, and state these standards publicly. Is there anyone, for example, who does not know that doctors train rigorously, or that law schools are presided over by persons of character and intellect, like John Houseman? Second, we must let the public know, in language that *it* uses, that our work requires expertise and judgment. Do we not all know that architects build for the future and that engineers train in the mysteries of physics and the higher calculus? Third, we must join the information age, cheerfully, willingly, and vigorously, lest we find our information replaced by less reliable information, and our staffs replaced by clerks and technicians. Finally, we must learn to view good publicity and informed public relations as life necessities, not as expendable functions. Specifically, we must treat public programming, which we have had enormous difficulty confronting as a professional issue, as a necessary part of archives administration. Public programs should not come at the end of the administrative process, though we often mistakenly put them there, and they most certainly should not be thought of last. For public relations and public programming to permeate all of our archival work, we must acquire new skills and change old attitudes. Developing an appropriate mind-set requires us to consider the outcomes of archival research, that is, its products, and to exploit these products to encourage increased usership and public support.

In the present literary flurry over management techniques, we hear a good deal about process- versus product-oriented businesses. We learn that the larger an organization is, the more likely it is to focus on how a job is done, rather than on what is produced. We learn that the most successful businesses show, among other characteristics, bias toward action, not technique; remain close to their customers; and emphasize autonomy

and entrepreneurship. Archival management, as a field, does not share these characteristics. We concentrate, for example, on perfecting standards for guides, not on producing a publication that researchers will read. We pay little attention to who our users are, how they operate, and what they create. We stress uniformity over individual productivity, and we regard the entrepreneurial attitude—"I have more researchers writing popular articles and producing films than you have"—as beneath us. These are dangerous attitudes in a competitive information world, but they can be changed.

The nature of our work makes publicizing outcomes difficult. While the results of archival research often contribute to significant events or products, they do not comprise them. Research in primary sources may be used in writing an influential book, but it is the book that is palpable and visible, not the research. A historic building may be saved from the wrecker's ball through research in the records, but the building enriches us, not the research behind it. These examples illustrate the point that we are at a disadvantage when compared to other professionals. The librarian does not need to tell a nation of self-helpers the value of a book. At the simplest level, who has not used Fanny Farmer, or Drs. Reuben or Spock, or Nathan Pritiken or Jane Fonda, or Amy Vanderbilt or Miss Manners? In the same fashion, the doctor does not need to tell the patient the value of medicine, nor the lawyer, of the law. And though one is unlikely to live through appendicitis without a doctor or to win a lawsuit without a lawyer, one can write a history, restore a bridge, or make a film without an archivist. Our services enhance and improve a product, but are not always essential to it. If this were not so, why our outrage at the historian who writes the book without our help, the planning commission that plans the neighborhood without us, or the environmentalist who writes the impact statement without our services?

The connection between archival research and results often appears unclear. Therefore publicizing the tie requires imagination, persistence, and a clear understanding not only of who our users are but what our relationship to them is. Our persistent, stated view that scholars are our principal users, when mounting evidence—as well as our own observations—tells us that this is not so does us damage. So do the attitudes that archivists are and should remain detached conduits for information rather than active disseminators of it, and that archival administration concerns the management of objects called records, not information linking past events to present circumstances. The first of these views, that scholars are our principal users, in importance if not in numbers, harms us most. Our isolation from our own administrators and other professional colleagues—our budget analysts, public relations officers, museum educators—and from organizations in our communities such as schools, businesses, and churches, which have many of the same interests we do, does us damage as individual professionals.

Fortunately, there are increasing efforts to find out who our users are and how they approach records. Of these, three should be noted. The first study, done by Edward Oetting between 1981 and 1983, examined three groups: college and university archives in New York State listed in the NHPRC directory, all university archives in member libraries of the Association of Research Libraries, and members of the SAA Section of Reference, Access, and Outreach. Oetting asked archivists in each of these groups to list their users by type and to rank them in order of frequency of use.[2] His survey relies on a traditional approach, which defined users by their occupations or status, not by

what they produce. In the first two groups surveyed, undergraduates and administrators led all the rest as users. In the New York survey, scholars and the ubiquitous "other" vied for the bottom rung on the use ladder. In the ARL survey, "other" won the bottom spot, only slightly preceded by scholars. Combined, the two surveys gave top use to administrators, but in listing the objectives of their archives, both groups of archivists cited "service as a repository for scholarly research" as their highest objective. Such a statistically significant gap, Oetting felt, raised questions about the priorities of university archivists. Not to mention, one must add, our grasp of reality, and the relation between the direction in which one runs and the location of the goalposts.

If we look at usership in terms of products, using researchers' own descriptions of what they produce, rather than categories of users (genealogist, historian) we get another picture. Arthur Breton, Archives of American Art, conducted an informal survey of 441 users of that very specialized collection of the records of American artists and art institutions.[3] Breton found that when asked to define the purpose of their research, that is, to identify a product or an outcome, most of the users indicated that they were working on publications ranging from course papers and dissertations on the one hand, to articles for local newspapers on the other. Of the remaining group, one-third were engaged in such activities as producing a film, writing a catalog, developing an exhibit, or documenting institutional holdings. But an astonishing 27 percent of this group were doing research for entirely personal reasons, including tracing family members in the art community, documenting personal art holdings, or simply satisfying their curiosity. Intellectual curiosity, that precious ingredient of learning, linked these nonacademic, nonprofessional users with their academic and professional peers.

Finally, Paul Conway, Gerald Ford Library, has recently produced an excellent study of the users of the Presidential Library system which suggests that the fields of inquiry at the Libraries, if not the backgrounds of the clients, are broader than had been supposed.[4] Though the most striking of his conclusions deal with users and the reference process, he also produces new information about usership. Formerly thought to be bastions of traditional research in political science and political history, the Library system does in fact boast 51 percent usership in these categories. But 49 percent of its users are working on projects relating to social history, economics, law, and other disciplines, some in academic fields, others in applied fields. Most significantly, Conway's study excluded users of audiovisual holdings, which undoubtedly would have skewed the results heavily toward the sector of public consumption.

These three studies, deriving from three very different sources, tell us a good deal about the real use of archives. First, they tell us that while we talk to each other about our service to scholarship, a few of potentially many users, whose only connection to that world is intellectual curiosity, have found us without our help or encouragement. Second, they tell us that with help, this usership could be increased and our materials used in ways that are profitable to the general public and to us. Third, they tell us that the products of archival research can be identified, even seen, heard, held, touched. They include, but are clearly not limited to, a range of products that are practical, publicly oriented, accessible to large numbers of people, and significant in an open society. Let us consider some of them.[5]

We each know instances in which records have been used to create an art form: a play, a novel, a documentary or fictional film. We can each cite an instance where records have been used to establish a claim to inheritance, to trace the use or ownership of land, to restore or protect old buildings, to locate old transportation routes and develop new ones, to provide individuals a link to the past via their nationality or cultural background, to plan a rally or promote a cause or get an initiative on the ballot, to reinforce evidence in a court case, to develop strategy for an environmental issue. These products have an impact because they touch us in daily ways. They inform us with a better understanding of our own work, and they can generate better understanding of archives and archivists. They are potentially usable as we seek support either from specific or general publics. They are the quarter inch holes of archival consumption.

To become successful purveyors of solutions, we first must find out, specifically and accurately, who uses our holdings. Second, we must begin learning what users produce with their research, and how those products affect our personal and public lives. One could consider four methods for ascertaining products. The first is the reference intake interview, in which we not only work with the user on specific reference questions, but also seek to know what he or she expects to result from this research, what its impact is likely to be, and how one can stay in touch to see what actually results. The questionnaire is a second device. The one produced by Paul Conway, for example, is a multipurpose tool, which asks users not only what they hope to produce from their research, but also how they learned about Presidential Library holdings, how they approached their research, and how finding aids and reference practices helped or failed to help them. The third method is the exit interview, which focuses on what the researcher has learned by using the records, and what he or she hopes to produce in light of new information. The exit interview differs from the intake interview by concentrating on changes in anticipated results which develop each time a new question is asked of the records. This is particularly the case in practical, publicly oriented projects where the question is often, Did or did it not happen? Will it work this way? or Is it there in the first place? Finally, there is the direct callback, in which the archivist chooses a sample of intake interviewees and tracks them to determine the results of their research: for example, Was the deed found and the township annexed? Was the building destroyed or saved? Has the film been produced or the play opened?

These are only four devices at the institutional level; others will suggest themselves. This process, in marketing called "customer input," tells us a great deal about our institution's level of service and usefulness, and provides us with ammunition for local support. Collected nationally, such illustrations can be used in a variety of media to improve the public sense of what archival institutions are and what archivists do.

Once we grasp this concept and then learn about the products of research, how can we use the information to generate support? At the local level—your office and mine—the first step is to identify the publics or constituencies we want to reach. The second step is to find out how best to reach them. For example, if the constituency we seek is the public body that funds or otherwise supports us, illustrations of use that are publicly oriented enhance public perception of the way the government operates and show how public resources have been efficiently saved or used are the most likely to succeed. One correspondent to the Task Force on Archives and Society put it succinctly: "ego, turf,

and votes." How this information is conveyed is often as important as what is conveyed. While it is possible to bury it in an annual report, it is wiser to observe the rule that peers influence peers and search out another public official willing to talk to your target audience about results. The same TFAS correspondent describes an incident in which the name of a western joint-city airport was changed without the permission of one of the cities. The mayor was outraged (ego, turf) and set the archives staff to searching for the original agreement. It was the city attorney, long a user of the archives, not the archivist, who told the mayor that the archives welcomed such searches because only thus could they persuade the city to improve the archives. Archivists should also persuade their peers to work for them by carrying success stories to the mayor, the comptroller, and those minor but powerful figures who control budget. "Let users be our emissaries," as another TFAS correspondent put it.

Armed with good examples of publicly oriented research projects that have yielded results, archivists can approach architects, lawyers, businessmen, preservationists, planners, and others either individually or through their organizations. Archivists should make use of each group's printed media or their other accepted routes of information to point out value and offer service. Targeting here is essential. We must know what groups or individuals we want to approach and by what means they are best likely to learn. Robert Wheeler, in his excellent leaflet, *Effective Public Relations: Communicating Our Image*, talks about this rifle approach, in which a specific group is targeted for a purpose—fundraising, donations, other support—then reached in person through direct appeals, service, or by whatever means is most likely to affect them directly.[6] General appeals to cultural and humanitarian values, those entreaties that ring of You Ought may have effect in certain instances, but they are less effective than the presentation of evidence that archivists can produce results.

General public relations activities which do not seek a specific market or target are not within the scope of this article, but it is worth noting that our efforts to reach out must go beyond those people who will actually use records to include those who are aficionados of history. If we seek support only from the research segment of the public, we cannot build a sufficient base to be sure of survival in difficult times, i.e., times that are either penurious, anti-historical, or anti-intellectual, nor even, to be sure, in good times. Our "public" comprises not only the researcher who walks in the door but the passerby at the exhibit who will never do research, and the family that stays at home because exhibits are too solitary, museums and archives too daunting, and history too remote, except, of course, when one discusses one's own ancestry or grandfather's first car. How much of the resources of any given institution are allocated to each of these publics is decided by the institution, but attention must be paid to all of them. It is not necessary to have gone deep-sea diving to know that "good things" come from it and to support research in it. Without having been to Baffin Island, one can have seen art that is produced there, and can urge the local museum to buy it. One can know in what ways coal mining should change without having been in a coal mine and can vote for legislators who make those changes. To forget that we are seen by everyone is to risk being seen by no one.

As a step toward facing the public, every archivist could do at least three things. First, read one or more of the excellent technical leaflets published by the American Associa-

tion for State and Local History on reaching the public, such as Robert Wheeler's *Effective Public Relations.*[7] Alternately, read G. Donald Adams, *Museum Public Relations*, also published by the AASLH.[8] The topics are practical and of use to archivists: evaluating public relations, working with the press, establishing speakers' bureaus, developing slide shows, and using local television and radio.

Second, devote staff time to analysis of the face your institution presents to the public, and to how your institution is perceived. Among the questions to be considered as a staff are: What sort of user feedback do we get? How do we go about getting it? Are there patterns in this feedback? What needs to be changed? What can we strengthen? If yours is a historical society or library, staff sessions should not be limited to archivists; publicity and public relations are an institutional effort, and those who are concerned with it should represent a cross-section of institutional functions. Products and how to discover them may well be one focus of these sessions. The effect of such meetings can be regenerating for the staff.

Third, have lunch with your public relations officer, the institution's editor, the development officer, or any other staff person whose job it is to represent your institution to the public. Tell that person about archival research projects done or in the making—projects that link the past to the present in human terms. Think about what touches people: World War II experiences, life in the Depression, ethnicity in the community, neighborhoods and the buildings and people in them. Ask your colleague about TV interviews or speakers bureaus, offer to help or, at least, to be a conduit for information. Your media professional or development person knows the channels; you can supply information. Institutional activities have great public appeal too, provided they are news: discoveries in old attics or exhibit openings. Service programs available to the public, such as school projects, programs for the elderly, and workshops on preserving family papers at home can strike a spark in the news professional as can a controversial speakers' series or a large or significant gift of records.

Well thought out public programs, vital to any public relations or educational enterprise, are best oriented around the results of research. The National Archives, a conservative organization in terms of outreach, runs two series of lunchtime talks, aimed at recipients of its *Calendar of Events*, office workers, passersby, and researchers in the building. The first series, Lunchtime Lectures, is based on research in progress, on work completed from primary sources, and on interpretation of sources. Topics have included a film on the Brooklyn Bridge, produced from photo collections at the National Archives and elsewhere; the evolution of a six-woman play based on Federal Writers Project Records; several talks on World War II research; and a series of reminiscences by women close to Eleanor Roosevelt, one of whom had just published her letters. The second series, Lunch with an Archivist, features members of the staff discussing their own research, their personal collections, or their travels. This series has included one archivist displaying his personal poster collection; a talk by a former journalist, now Archives manager, on his dissertation in progress called "The News from Harpers Ferry," a study of how the media treated John Brown's raid; and a talk-cum-reading of love letters from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, presented by an exhibition specialist preparing an article. None of these are academically oriented lectures, though they might be. They are aimed at a specific audience: the historically

minded person who probably does not use the Archives but might, and who is available during the day. The atmosphere is informal, though the programs are carefully structured, and are intended to show that both the records and the staff are accessible. The Archives has also offered to the general public a performing arts series based on the preservation of traditional American folk culture, a film series, and a series on historic Washington buildings, many of them preserved with the aid of research in the records. In planning these programs, at least three imperatives must be kept in mind.

First, have in mind a particular segment of the public as you plan your program. This can be other researchers, certain age or ethnic groups, visitors to the museum who do not do research but who are demonstrably interested in history, or specific interest groups such as businessmen, the arts community, or preservationists. Second, how you visualize or learn about these publics will govern the content and format of the programs you provide for them. Some will be reached by service programs such as workshops on preserving family documents or because they are volunteers or part-time archivists. Some will be reached by performances based on sources, including folk culture hobbyists, children's groups, and other members of the arts community. Others will be interested in programs that help them reconstruct their own past; among this group are senior citizens or retirees who respond to sessions of reminiscences, publicly staged oral interviews, or panel sessions that invite anecdotes from the audience. Third, choose a promotional vehicle that is familiar to the audience you are trying to reach. People won't come if they don't hear about it. Some groups respond to direct mail; others have their own newsletters or dissemination networks; still others respond to word of mouth. The archivist-cum-public programmer must find the most efficient of these for any given public.

Service programs are often the most effective category of public programming. Sometimes planned, often spontaneous, these activities demonstrate that the archivist and the archival institution can respond to public need. They include programs designed, for example, to maintain regular contact with schools and community organizations of all kinds, not just those concerned with history. All groups have records to maintain and welcome advice on the subject. Service programs can include links with other institutions that regularly do historical programs or provide educational offerings in which records can be used. These may be short or long courses given by archivists or other specialists in genealogy, preservation, or research methods, or they may be programs taken to shut-ins, children's homes, or the elderly. In each instance, the initiative must come from the archivist; often the act of offering itself enhances the person and the institution.

The existence of the Task Force on Archives and Society has brought to light examples of fascinating service programs devised by archivists. A regional center in Washington State helped found a Chinese historical society. An Illinois archives sponsors an extensive adult education program. A Texas repository produces a radio call-in show on history. Another repository writes a monthly column for a local AFL-CIO newspaper, which has helped the archives gain the sympathy of the labor community in acquiring collections and increasing use.

A professional colleague says that the will and the talent to do public outreach are instinctive. In part he is right but it also takes aggressiveness, self-confidence, and the

willingness to fail occasionally. The will to reach out to the public is anti-passive, anti-elite. It is also regenerating. Talk to the audience after a good workshop or lecture, or after a zoning hearing, court case, or preservation hearing in which the holdings of your archives were used, and you will cease to worry about image, professionalism, or position in the community. Demonstrating how the use of records saves money, increases efficiency, promotes good causes, or gives pleasure constitutes public service well beyond the traditional and necessary-but-passive activity of reference service, and it is essential if we are to expect public understanding or support. While it may create some distress—we will have to see ourselves as others see us—it will also have rewards, among the best of which will be to say, when asked what we do, not that archivists acquire, describe, and make available records but that we help you find, restore, save, build. As a man said, we sell quarter inch holes.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR, REVISED, 2001: *Before her retirement in 1991, Elsie Freeman Finch was Chief of the Education Branch of the National Archives and Records Administration. There she and her staff developed an innovative program, based on the use of primary sources, including publications, workshops, short courses, lectures, and performing arts for elementary-through-collegiate level students and instructors, lifelong learners, and the general public. Earlier, she was head of the manuscript division, Washington University Libraries, and assistant curator of manuscripts for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. She had previous careers in advertising, publishing, and secondary and collegiate education. She has published widely in archival literature on public relations and outreach; following her retirement, she commissioned, wrote and edited essays for Advocating Archives, a guide to public relations for archivists published in 1994 by Scarecrow Press.*

Cofounder and first chair of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, she is a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists and has been active in it for more than 35 years, serving on its Council and Executive Committee, as a presidential nominee, and as chair or member of numerous committees, conferences, and programs. She holds an A.B. from SUNY at Albany in American history and literature and an M.A. from Boston University in English literature. She now lives in Ithaca, New York, with her husband, Herbert Finch, where each is active in community affairs. This article is

based on a paper she presented at the Society of American Archivists' annual meeting in Washington, D.C., September 1984.

NOTES

1. Theodore Leavitt, *The Marketing Imagination* (New York: Free Press, 1984).
2. Edward Oetting, "User Demographics: What's the Use?" (unpublished paper, Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, spring 1983 meeting, New Brunswick, NJ).
3. Arthur Breton, Curator of Manuscripts, Archives of American Art, compiled these figures from user statistics between January 1980 and November 1982. They are available from him at AAA, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 20560. *(Author's note, 2001: Breton died in 1999.)*
4. Paul Conway, "Research in Presidential Libraries: A User Study" (unpublished report done under the auspices of the Gerald R. Ford Library, November 1984).
5. See *Toward a Usable Past: Historical Records in the Empire State* (Albany, NY: State Historical Records Advisory Board, January 1984). Pages 19–24 of this excellent report list practical uses of records that suggest products. See also the unpublished TFAS report, "SAA Task Force on Archives and Society 'Action Track'," presented to the SAA Council, summer 1984.
6. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History. Technical Leaflet 3, 1970, 8 pp.
7. Technical Leaflet 3.
8. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1983.

THE FBI RECORDS APPRAISAL

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BY JAMES GREGORY BRADSHER

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD, 2001: The FBI Records Appraisal—Lessons Learned

In the twenty years since the National Archives' 1981 appraisal of the records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, I have come to believe that there were four lessons learned from the effort. The first, and most important, is that the disposition decisions made by appraisers were so perfect (almost scientifically so) in an effort to ensure historically valuable records were not destroyed that the decisions themselves became too cumbersome to be efficiently implemented. In hindsight it would have made more sense to retain all of the records in more series (or FBI file classifications) and thereby minimize the time spent by FBI personnel trying, based on our numerous criteria, to identify individual cases for retention. Of course, by doing so, the National Archives would have had to accession many case files without any real research potential.

The second lesson learned is that the more experienced the appraisers are, as a general rule, the more likely that they will tend to side on destruction versus retention. Less experienced appraisers tend to find reasons to keep things whereas the more experienced appraisers tend to find reasons to destroy things. This view is based on statistical data that were compiled during the project that indicated how individual staff members rated individual files they reviewed. The third lesson is that there is most likely going to be a subjective element during the appraisal process. If a person has a particular interest in a specific subject, then records relating to that subject tend to take on a greater importance than that given to those records by one's colleagues. The last lesson relates to public awareness. NARA did not do an adequate job of explaining to the press the importance of the appraisal nor explaining to the archival and historical communities how the appraisal was accomplished and what the criteria were for the selection of series and portions of series for retention. It was because of the latter reasons that I wrote the article about the appraisal. I was concerned that many people, none of whom it seems ever read our two-volume 1,500-page appraisal report, believed that somehow we simply determined that "fat files" were permanently valuable as well as were a statistical sampling of the files to capture routine information. This, of course, was not the case. I hope that reading this article today will remind us of

the magnitude and importance of the 1981 appraisal of the records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

ABSTRACT: The appraisal of the headquarters and field office records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation by the National Archives in 1981 was perhaps the most important and certainly the most extensive and expensive appraisal carried out by federal archivists. In this article the author discusses the FBI records appraised; the appraisal methodology, including sampling case files for appraisal; the decision-making process for retaining records; and the records to be retained. The author also provides the background to the appraisal, including the 1979 lawsuit that led to the appraisal, and the judicial process that took place during and subsequent to the appraisal.

On 8 September 1986, Judge Harold H. Greene of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia issued an order lifting a ban he had imposed on 10 January 1980, prohibiting the destruction of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) records. This order marked the culmination of civil action 79-1655 in his court.[1] It also marked the end of one of the most important, and certainly the most extensive, appraisals of public records ever undertaken. Former Archivist of the United States Robert M. Warner called it "the most expensive and elaborate appraisal project" in the history of the National Archives. F. Gerald Ham of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin characterized it as the "most important records appraisal ever undertaken in this country.[2]

The events leading up to the appraisal and the resulting appraisal report have been discussed in several forums, but nothing substantial has been published about the appraisal itself.[3] This is because those most knowledgeable, the appraisers, were requested by their agency not to write anything about it until litigation was concluded. Now this article by one of the appraisers can discuss the records, the methodology, and the disposition decisions that were made.

There are four reasons why the appraisal of the FBI's records was so important and extensive. First were the nature and significance of the records. These records, according to Judge Greene, "perhaps more than those of any other agency, constitute a significant repository of the record of the recent history of this nation, and they represent the work product of an organization that has touched the lives of countless Americans."[4] Second was the volume of records to be appraised, over 500,000 cubic feet in more than seventy locations. Third was the number of archivists involved. Seventeen archivists, the number normally assigned to appraise the records of the entire federal government, were assigned to the project.[5] And fourth, and perhaps most important, was the appraisal methodology employed.

The National Archives undertook the exhaustive project because of a lawsuit initiated against the government in 1979 by eleven civil liberties, religious, peace, and historical organizations and forty individuals who believed that the FBI was destroying valuable records with the concurrence of the National Archives.[6] Specifically, they believed that the National Archives had not previously appraised the FBI's records properly.[7]

Judge Greene concurred in this belief, observing that "the Archivist and those under his supervision have failed for a period of over thirty years adequately to carry out these statutory and regulatory responsibilities with respect to the records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation." On 10 January 1980, Greene issued a preliminary injunction prohibiting the FBI from destroying any records until the National Archives had appraised them fully and developed a new record disposition schedule.[8]

Shortly after Greene's injunction, the National Archives informed the FBI it intended to have nine archivists appraise the Bureau's records between 31 March and 22 August 1980.[9] However, difficulties arose over access. Access to the records was required to appraise them fully. The FBI was not particularly eager to comply. For over five decades the records of the FBI had been closed to all outsiders, even to judicial and Department of Justice officials.[10] Previous efforts by the National Archives to appraise the FBI records had not been as thorough as they might have been, due to the lack of access.[11] The Bureau did not want National Archives employees to have access to Internal Revenue Service taxpayer returns and grand jury and Title III (1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act) wiretap materials contained in the FBI files, or to informant names.[12] Thus, the appraisal did not take place during 1980 as the two agencies sparred over access questions.[13]

While FBI officials had concerns about National Archives appraisers having total access to their records, they certainly welcomed an appraisal if it would result in their being allowed again to destroy large quantities of records without sufficient value to warrant retention. They did so for the same reasons other federal officials desire to rid themselves of temporary (nonpermanent) records: to save space, filing equipment, and time in finding records that are really needed.[14]

Believing the National Archives and the FBI were not moving expeditiously enough in resolving the access question the plaintiffs late in 1980 complained to the court. Greene held hearings early in January 1981 to determine what was delaying the appraisal and what could be done to speed up the process. As a result of the hearings, Greene ordered the FBI and National Archives to report to him regularly on their progress, since "close and constant supervision by the court is necessary because the agencies have not complied with an earlier order."[15]

Robert M. Warner, Archivist of the United States, realizing the archival and judicial importance of the pending appraisal, appointed James E. O'Neill, Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries, to direct the project. Warner agreed to O'Neill's request for whatever resources might be needed to meet Warner's goals of having an appraisal that would be as thorough and as free of criticism as possible.[16] O'Neill named as his deputy project director Charles M. Dollar, then the director of the Technology Assessment Division.

On 5 February 1981, Dollar called Robert W. Scherrer, chief of the records section of the FBI's Records Management Division, to inform him that the Archivist desired a new plan for the disposition of the FBI headquarters and field records for submission to the judge, and asked to meet with him. When they met the next day Dollar informed Scherrer "that the Archivist considered that an impartial, professional NARS (National Archives and Records Service) appraisal of FBI records was one of the most important tasks ever undertaken by NARS, in that the credibility and authority of NARS were at

stake." Scherrer informed Dollar that the FBI was "extremely desirous of assisting NARS in any way possible in their appraisal."[17]

O'Neill and Dollar had already, in late January, formed a small team of archivists to develop a method of appraising the millions of FBI case files.[18] On February 5, this team visited the FBI to discuss the project. The team learned that the two major challenges of the appraisal project were the volume of records and their physical locations. FBI records were maintained in three types of offices: FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C., where policies and procedures are established and from which oversight is maintained over the operations of the Bureau; fifty-nine field offices which conduct the bulk of the FBI's investigative work; and liaison offices, termed legats, in a dozen embassies, including Paris, London, and Mexico City.[19]

In the Washington, D.C., headquarters there were over six million criminal, civil, security, applicant, and administrative case files dating back sixty years and nearly one hundred indexes to the files, including a general index consisting of 65 million 3" x 5" cards.[20] In the FBI field operations there were at least five million case files and over 100 million index cards. Altogether, there were over 500,000 cubic feet of records, 260,000 cubic feet of which were in the headquarters and the remainder in the field operations. For security reasons the volume of records maintained in the legats was kept to a minimum.[21]

The Bureau's current record-keeping system was created in October 1921. It is a classified filing system in which each classification (or category of records) relates to a specific violation of law or specific administrative activity. In 1981 there were 214 classifications.[22] Under this system each case file carries a classification number plus a sequential number. For example, a kidnapping case file might carry the number 7-10, indicating it was the tenth case opened in classification 7-kidnapping. Each document in the case file has its own numerical designation, referred to as serials. Hence 7-10-8 would refer to the eighth document in the tenth kidnapping case. This process of serialization, providing a unique numeric identifier for each document, gives the Bureau control of its records at the item level. Bureau investigations involving more than one violation are normally classified under the more serious crime. If an individual had been involved in several violations over a period of time, separate case files would have been initiated for each violation. However, in security cases only one file is used for the individual or organization. When a case has been opened for an individual or organization under a particular security classification, all subsequent documentation relating to security matters is filed in that case, regardless of the nature of the investigation. Although most of the file maintenance procedures adopted in the Bureau headquarters are duplicated in field offices and overseas legats, some variations do exist. Because the files are numbered consecutively, the same case will not have the same number at headquarters and in the field offices.

Each classification begins with a zero (0) file and a double zero (00) file, which are used for documents relating to the individual classification but which do not warrant an individual file. Most 00 files include material relating to the administrative history of the classification and document why the classification was initiated, changes in legislation modifying the Bureau's investigative responsibilities, investigative policy, unique investigative procedures, and jurisdictional disputes between the Bureau and other fed-

eral agencies. Before the 00 files were established, 0 files were sometimes used for policy documentation relating to the classification. But for the most part the 0 files now consist of citizen complaints, routine requests for information, general reference material, and newspaper clippings. In 1977, the FBI began using the 0 files for one-serial (single document) cases that would previously have been separate case files.

Within each classification the individual case files follow the 0 and 00 files. The number of case files in each classification ranges from less than one hundred to hundreds of thousands. For example, among the larger classifications at FBI headquarters in 1981 were classifications 100 (Domestic Security) and 105 (Foreign Counterintelligence), together consisting of over 800,000 case files (13,000 cubic feet). The case files contain a variety of documentation, including FBI agent reports; teletype messages; prosecutive summaries; accounts of interviews and physical surveillance; letters; memorandums; lab reports; informant reports; photographs; newspaper clippings and other public record material; and logs, transcripts, and summaries of electronic surveillance.[23]

Although most records are maintained in central file rooms in headquarters and in the field offices, some are kept separately from the related case file or as a separate series outside the main file room. The latter include records in special file rooms, electronic surveillance (ELSUR) materials, personnel and budget records, FBI National Academy records, public inquiries, automated and audiovisual materials, and sensitive and confidential materials maintained under the personal control of the special agents in charge (SACs) of the field offices.

At the outset O'Neill and Dollar realized that National Archives appraisers could not review all of the millions of case files in the central records system, nor could they appraise the FBI's records in the traditional manner. They could not just look at the first, last, and various randomly selected case files and form an initial opinion about the value of each series (classification) of case files because each series of case files contained a broad mixture of individual case files of varying values. The National Archives had to develop a new methodology to sample files for evaluation from each classification in order to make judgments as to their values.

In February 1981, Dollar and his small working group decided that the National Archives had to approach the records systematically and "scientifically," if logistical, judicial, and political problems were to be overcome. Otherwise the National Archives could not identify the specific case files that needed to be retained. Moreover, the plaintiffs would argue that the National Archives had not properly identified records warranting continued preservation—not only for historical reasons, but also to protect the legal rights of those who may have been harmed by some FBI action. The critical problem for the National Archives was to devise a selection process that could accurately identify a relatively small sample of case files that was representative of the FBI central records system. Accurate representation of the total number of records in the sample was important since the sample would be used to identify aggregate characteristics useful in developing a records retention plan for each classification.

The National Archives used the sampling methodology developed by Michael Hindus to appraise Massachusetts court files as a model.[24] In 1978 a team of appraisers headed by Hindus appraised 35,000 cubic feet of Massachusetts Superior Court files dating from 1859 to 1959. The Hindus team examined 3,400 files of the 2.7 million case files

and developed an appraisal plan based on their findings. The success of this project suggested that statistical sampling could be used to appraise the much more voluminous case files of the FBI.

By the first week of March, Dollar's team developed a methodology to appraise the FBI's records that involved systematic sampling to identify case files to be inspected. The archivists would examine the selected files and record their characteristics on a data collection sheet. The sheet asked approximately seventy-five questions about a file and its contents, such as the size and date span of the file, the types of documents in the file, the origins and results of the case, the subject of the case, and the presence of data on the use of informants, electronic surveillance, mail intercepts, or other sensitive investigative techniques. It also provided space for general comments that would later be used during the development of appraisal recommendations. A statistical profile of each classification would be developed from these sheets to aid in making appraisal recommendations.[25]

When the methodology for the appraisal was adopted and an agreement on access was reached with the FBI, O'Neill selected sixteen archivists to undertake the appraisal based upon their education, appraisal experience, knowledge of investigative records, and possession of a top secret security clearance.[26]

Before they got underway, the appraisal task force was briefed on the FBI records, filing systems and procedures, and security matters by Robert W. Scherrer, section chief of the FBI's Records Systems Section; Thomas B. Dudney, supervisor of the FBI's Records Research Staff; and Clara Glock, the Bureau's specialist on archival matters.[27] Understanding the records and filing systems was difficult. David J. Garrow, who made extensive use of the FBI's files for his book about the Bureau's dealings with Martin Luther King, Jr., concluded that "understanding the FBI's extensive and complicated filing system is no easy task. Quite probably no one outside the Bureau fully grasps its intricacies."[28]

Not only was the filing system a challenge to understand, but so were the contents of the files. On the surface they appeared straightforward. In actuality, they were not so easy to comprehend. "Learning to find one's way through FBI files," according to one researcher, "is no easy chore."[29] A Department of Justice senior attorney in the mid-1970s investigating illegal break-ins reported that his staff had been on the case more than a year and "they still didn't know how to read an FBI file."[30] Most files contained dozens of abbreviations.[31] And many files contained euphemisms, such as the use of the terms "special techniques" or "sensitive investigative techniques" when agents reported break-ins.[32]

Because of the importance of protecting the legal rights of citizens, the task force met several times before the appraisal began with Department of Justice attorneys experienced in legal rights issues to discuss the legal rights implications of the records to be appraised. The task force wanted to ensure either the permanent retention of, or the establishment of lengthy disposal dates for, those records that protected the legal rights of citizens, including records relating to alleged victims of improper FBI actions who claimed or might claim they had suffered legal wrongs.[33]

The appraisal team read all the policy files in the 00 files on each type of investigative activity, i.e., series or classification, before appraising the records. Using these files, the

task force produced a synopsis, which provided a historical statement for each classification for use during the appraisal process.

The actual systematic appraisal, i.e., selecting and reviewing files, began late in March 1981. At the end of each day the task force produced a computer printout of the file numbers of cases in the classifications that they would appraise the next day. Each morning the printout was used by an appraiser, accompanied by an FBI clerk, to pull the case files to be reviewed. Thus the Bureau had no advance knowledge of which files would be examined. This procedure was followed both in headquarters and in the field.

Once the files were pulled, FBI staff, in the presence of task force members, masked information that the latter were not allowed to see. This included grand jury testimony, Internal Revenue Service taxpayer information, Title III wiretap material, and the names of FBI informants. Generally such material occurred in large blocks, and was covered with an envelope. The FBI personnel noted the type of record being covered on the outside of the envelope and both FBI and task force members initialed the envelope. Only the names of FBI informants were covered with small pieces of masking tape. The symbol numbers assigned informants, the information provided by informants, and, generally, biographical information about the informants were not covered.

Then the case files were ready to be reviewed. To prevent one person's judgment from having a preponderance of weight several appraisers reviewed different case files in the same classification. This assured that each classification of records would receive an unbiased evaluation.

The review of the case files, almost 20,000 in all, began with each appraiser reading the classification synopsis that provided the general background about why certain investigations were undertaken and the FBI's policies and procedures relating to the investigations. Then the appraiser evaluated each case file and completed a data collection sheet.[34]

The most important piece of information on the data collection sheet was the reviewer's rating of the case file. The rating scale included no, low, medium, or high research potential. These four ratings were carefully defined so that the aggregate data could be standardized and comparable. A "high rating" was defined as evidence or information that was unique and of such substantive detail and richness that the case file could stand alone as a primary historical source. A "medium rating" was defined as evidence or information that was sufficiently rich that the case file significantly complemented other historical sources. A "low rating" was defined as evidence or information so lacking in detail and richness that it was only a modest supplement to other historical sources and the case file had significance only in the context of other case files in the same classification. A rating of "none" was defined as evidence or information so ordinary and routine that the case file had no significance as a historical source even in the context of other case files in the same classification.[35] After the selected case files in a classification were reviewed, the appraisers wrote up their general impressions about the classification. These would later be used in the appraisal process as well as in drafting the appraisal report.

By mid-May 1981, the review of 5,832 headquarters case files was completed. Of these 4,165, or 71 percent, were identified as having no research potential. Of the 29 percent with research potential 1,328 were rated low (22 percent), 301 were rated

medium (5 percent) and only 38 were rated high (less than 1 percent). These low percentages reflect the fact that much of the FBI's work is routine.[36] The files, the task force found, were not bulging "dossiers" as many people believed. Most case files (73 percent) were one-quarter of an inch or less thick.[37]

Before beginning its review of field office files, the task force reviewed 267 Mexico City and Hong Kong legal attaché files at headquarters. For security reasons, FBI files accumulated in the legal attachés are only maintained abroad for a year before being retired to headquarters. Since the legal attachés simply provided information to the FBI office, either headquarters or field office, conducting an investigation, their files were found to have almost no research potential, especially when compared to the files of the office conducting the investigation or, in Bureau terms, the "office of origin."

It was impossible to visit all fifty-nine field offices. The task force decided to review files in the three largest offices, Washington, D.C., New York, and Los Angeles, and four representative offices, Chicago, Atlanta, Miami, and Dallas. The three largest offices were selected for their size, their geographic distribution, and because they were also major centers for many of the FBI's most sensitive and important investigative programs. The other four offices were selected because they tended to demonstrate the varied investigative emphases in different regions of the nation.[38]

The task force began its review with the Washington field office (WFO) case files. In pulling files for review, it was learned that in many classifications the pre-1968 case files had been destroyed under National Archives schedules as no longer having an administrative value to the Bureau.[39] Therefore, the computer-generated sample had to be discarded. Because FBI statistics on the number of case files in each classification in each field office only identified the number of the last case opened and the last case file destroyed, the only ways to identify the amount of destruction were to physically check the storage area to determine numerical gaps or to review the destruction list for each classification. Both steps were taken and a new sample with a random start was generated for each classification in which substantial destruction had occurred. Sampling could begin only where there was a substantial number of extant case files (otherwise referred to as a run), since a sample would omit those case files preceding the run. So the task force decided to pull an "extra sample" of three case files (at the beginning, middle, and end) from extant case files preceding the run. Because many of these case files tended to be multi-section, and because older, multi-sectioned field office case files were found to have some research potential, they were not incorporated into the field office data base in order to avoid distortions of the statistical profiles. Instead, the "extra sample" constituted a separate data base.

Altogether 2,452 cases were reviewed in the statistical sample of the Washington field office. This was supplemented by 111 "extras" (case files selected from the period of extensive destruction), and 37 "specials" (comparisons of headquarters and field office case files for the same investigation). The latter was done to test the hypothesis that headquarters files tended to have greater value than their field counterparts, in part because the headquarters version of the case contained or captured the important documentation from each field office participating in an investigation. The question of field files, it should be noted, had played the critical role in the plaintiffs' arguments to the court. They charged that the National Archives had authorized the destruction of the

field files without thoroughly evaluating their value, and had simply accepted representations by the FBI that all pertinent information in the headquarters file was duplicated in the field file. Therefore, great attention was given to the review of the field files.

At the Washington field office, the task force also examined the 0 file for fifty-six classifications, the electronic surveillance indices and tapes, and various files in classifications 62 (Administrative Inquiries) and 66 (Administrative Matters).[40] During the headquarters review they found that these two administrative classifications did not lend themselves to the sampling methodology because of their heterogeneous nature. Nevertheless, they examined them and made notes about their value, so that when appraisal recommendations were developed for the administrative classifications based on a file-by-file appraisal judgment, the appraisers would have a general idea of their contents.

Next, teams of ten task force members each visited the New York and Los Angeles field offices, while teams of five task force members visited the Dallas, Miami, Chicago, and Atlanta field offices. At each office they examined various records in addition to the files in the samples. These generally included the special agent's in charge (SAC) safe, all special indices, the extant personal and confidential files, bulky exhibits (i.e., things too large to be maintained with the case files), the main index to the central records system, and electronic surveillance indices and tapes. They also reviewed numerous 0 and 00 files, "control files," and files in classifications 62, 66, and 80 (latter classification dealing with the SAC's "contacts").[41] The Los Angeles field office's holdings relating to Japanese-Americans and Japanese nationals in the U.S. during World War II, the Dallas field office's holdings relating to the Kennedy assassination, and the New York field office's machine-readable racketeer profile were examined. When time permitted, task force members visited resident agencies (suboffices of field offices) to see how they operated and to what extent they maintained records.[42]

In the seven field offices, task force members reviewed about 11,000 case files, including those in the basic sample, extras, and specials. Three-fourths of the field office case files were rated as having no research potential. That as many as one-fourth did have some research potential was, in part, because the files remaining before 1970 had been deliberately retained because of their continuing importance.[43]

Besides the review of case files identified by sampling, the task force also reviewed multi-sectioned case files to test the "fat file" hypothesis put forth in the Massachusetts Superior Court cases appraisal. This hypothesis suggested that the likelihood of case files having archival value increased with their size.[44] To test it, some task force members reviewed three multi-sectioned files in 92 classifications at headquarters. Over 70 percent of the 276 multi-sectioned case files in this special sample were found to have some research value. Of the 653 multi-sectioned case files reviewed as part of the regular sampling, over 80 percent were found to have research potential. The task force concluded that in most classifications case files having two or more sections should be retained permanently.[45]

When the review process was completed the task force began a month-long process of evaluating the material it had accumulated and making appraisal recommendations. For each of about two hundred classifications a task force member reviewed the administrative history, comments, data collection sheets, and statistical profiles (over seven

thousand pages of cross-tabulations with indications between different variables, such as size and research potential), and then drafted an appraisal recommendation. The recommendation included an analysis of the classification and a proposed disposition for all of the record categories within it. That included headquarters and field office files—their correlates (headquarters/field office versions of cases) when applicable, "fat files" (i.e., multisectioned), and samples.

After each appraisal package had been reviewed by the other task force members, the preparer presented an oral analysis of the classification and the proposed disposition recommendation. The task force members deliberated and then voted on each type of record in a classification, with the majority holding sway.[46] The task force agreed that all headquarters 00 files would be retained to document policies and procedures. Although the headquarters 0 files frequently contained only public correspondence and "nut mail," the task force found that these files sometimes contained substantive material, and thus, in some classifications the 0 files were recommended for permanent retention as well.

The next decision was whether to keep all case files in a particular classification. All case files in fifty-one headquarters classifications were recommended for permanent retention.[47] In those classifications where all case files were not going to be retained, various disposition recommendations were made for the specific case files to be retained. In some instances the task force recommended retaining multi-sectioned cases, case files with a specific number of serials (individual documents), case files containing certain information (such as cases with an institution or organization as the subject of the case) or resulting in certain actions (e.g., prosecution), and case files for certain time periods (e.g., all pre-1940 case files).[48] These recommendations were made for headquarters as well as the field files. In some classifications, it was decided that both the headquarters and field office version of a case (or correlates) would be retained.

In about half of the headquarters classifications the task force recommended retaining case files based on one of two sampling plans, often in conjunction with other retention criteria. These were small systematic evidential samples to illustrate the nature of the Bureau's investigations in the classifications and larger systematic informational samples to capture an aggregate of information useful for sociologists, criminologists, and social historians who employ statistical techniques to discern significant patterns in the activities of the publics they are studying.[49] The size of the sample depended upon the research potential and the volume of records in the classification. The sampling will result in 99,000 headquarters and 37,500 field case files being retained permanently, or about 10 percent of the total number of case files being retained.[50]

The recommendations were often quite complex. For example, in classification 100 (Domestic Security), where there were 487,113 case files in 1981 at headquarters, multisectioned cases were to be retained as well as all cases with eighteen or more serials, all informant cases, all cases with an institution or organization as subject, and a systematic informational sample of 2,500 case files per decade beginning in 1939.

In a few classifications it was decided that there were not enough case files to make an informed appraisal judgment. In such instances the task force recommended that the classification (or part of it) not be authorized for any disposition until such time as enough case files had accumulated. Nor was disposition recommended for several ad-

ministrative classifications that were too heterogeneous for anything other than a file-by-file appraisal.

After the task force agreed upon its recommendations, preparers of the appraisal packages revised their analyses and disposition recommendations to conform with the group discussions and votes. This material was forwarded to O'Neill for approval, which he gave with very few exceptions.

To ensure that valuable case files would not be destroyed if the appraisal recommendations for individual classifications failed to capture them, two "safety nets" were adopted to identify such files for retention. The first was a set of over a dozen specific criteria to identify case files for retention regardless of their not being identified by the general retention recommendations.[51] Examples of these criteria are cases mentioned in Bureau annual reports, cases mentioned in FBI testimony before or submitted in evidence to a committee of Congress, cases involving organizations named in the attorney general's list of subversive organizations, and cases accepted by the Supreme Court that involved FBI investigative activities.[52]

The second safety net was developed early in the project to address the concern that disposition decisions based on a sampling technique might miss some important events, organizations, and persons. Thus, five hundred letters were sent out to university and college history departments, presidents of every major historical organization, and many individual scholars and journalists, soliciting suggestions for the names of persons, organizations, and events the FBI might have investigated that the respondents believed were important enough to warrant retention if any case files had been created. Approximately two hundred responses were received. In addition, task force members and National Archives staff submitted lists of names. After the duplicates were removed, some three thousand names remained. These names were checked in the FBI indexes to determine whether a case had been opened on the named individual or subject. In most instances, they were and 9,300 case files were identified as "named exceptional cases." Later, to test the appraisal recommendations, a sample of these cases was selected and the case file numbers were checked against the files recommended for retention. The review showed that in most instances, the case file would have been saved using only the general retention criteria. This is because most of the named exceptional cases were found in the security and criminal classifications, where most case files were recommended for retention.[53]

In all, over 300,000 cubic feet of case files were appraised. The task force recommended retaining at least 50,000 cubic feet, with over half to come from the field offices.[54] Looking at it another way, of the 11 million case files appraised, at an absolute minimum 800,000 headquarters and 350,000 field office case files were to be retained. Many records not contained in the FBI's central file system were also recommended for permanent retention.[55]

The task force consulted with three groups when finalizing the disposition recommendations: a five-member subcommittee of the National Archives Advisory Committee; seven academics and a journalist who had special knowledge of the FBI, the Bureau's records, or fields in which the Bureau was active; and ten senior National Archives archivists. Each group of consultants was briefed about the project, its background, methodology, relevant legal issues, and specific findings and recommendations.[56] Simi-

lar presentations were made to three members of the National Archives Advisory Council and Michael Hindus, director of the Massachusetts Superior Court appraisal project. All of these individuals were given an opportunity to express their concerns and desires and to suggest changes to the proposed retention and disposal recommendations. Some of these suggestions were subsequently incorporated in the final report.[57]

During the latter part of October and the beginning of November 1981, the task force prepared its report to the court. This included a records disposition schedule; chapters on various FBI files, such as J. Edgar Hoover's "personal" and "official and confidential" files; implementation instructions for the schedule; and an explanation of the appraisal's methodology, procedures, and results.

The first week of November the task force addressed the issue of when permanent case files would be transferred to the National Archives. The FBI, concerned about protecting national security, informants, and privacy, desired long periods of time between the closing of a case and its transfer to the National Archives. An agreement was reached whereby the case files to be retained in seventeen obsolete classifications and several selected case files would be transferred when the litigation involving the appraisal was concluded; permanent case files in six classifications would be transferred when they were thirty years old; and those in most other classifications would be transferred when they were fifty years old.[58]

On November 9, the date established by the court for delivering the report to the court, the task force and many of the National Archives staff members who had helped on the project met with the Archivist, who praised their effort and signed the appraisal report. The two-volume, 1,400-page report was then delivered to Judge Greene.[59]

As expected, initial responses to the appraisal results were mixed. Marshall Perlin, attorney for the plaintiffs, told the Society of American Archivists' *Newsletter* editor that "NARS had labored mightily and hard and came forth with a mouse—a large mouse." F. Gerald Ham, of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, reviewing the retention plan, wrote that "the task force has given archivists an important appraisal methodology for the selective retention of voluminous records." History professor Athan Theoharis, who had written extensively about the FBI and its files, wrote that with few exceptions "the National Archives' proposed FBI records retention plan reflects the high quality of the Archives' professionalism" and that the plan "can serve as a model for future records retention plans."[60]

It was assumed that Judge Greene would act expeditiously on the case because of the public interest in it. However, he had more pressing business, playing a pivotal role in the breakup of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company.[61] So, a five-year judicial process began during which time the two parties produced reams of paper attacking and defending the appraisal report.[62] When the judge eventually reviewed the report late in 1985, he found that the National Archives had carried out its responsibility and, with a few minor exceptions, agreed with the appraisal recommendations.[63] During the summer of 1986, the National Archives reluctantly agreed to change a few of its recommendations so the judge would approve the plan, thereby lifting his injunction and allowing the FBI to destroy eligible records.[64] Once the National Archives modified its appraisal plan on 1 July 1986, and the plaintiffs were given a final opportunity to

express their views on the revised recommendations, Judge Greene approved the plan on 8 September 1986.[65]

Leonard Rapport has observed that when appraising records there is "one immutable law: there are no perfect appraisals and the best appraisal is the one that does the least harm.[66] The 1981 appraisal of the FBI's records meets Rapport's definition. Undoubtedly some people will maintain that valuable files will be destroyed as a result of the appraisal. And indeed that may happen, though the chances are small. What will be destroyed are those records that lack sufficient values for the taxpayer to bear the burden of indefinite preservation. Some of these files may be of interest to someone, for "any scholar with a little intellectual ingenuity can find a plausible justification for keeping almost every record that was ever produced."[67] There are also those who believe that in an attempt to ensure that no valuable records will be destroyed, too many files with insufficient values will be retained permanently. In any event, the National Archives, with the help of the FBI, produced, in the words of Judge Greene, "a reasonable plan which will permit researchers and others to attain access to those FBI records which may be of historical and other legitimate interest."[68]

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NOTES

1. *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (D.D.C.).
2. Robert M. Warner, "The National Archives: A Memoir, 1980–1985," *Guardian of Heritage: Essays on the History of the National Archives,* ed. Timothy Walch (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1985): 84; "FBI Appraisal Submitted," *SAA Newsletter* (January 1982): 2.
3. Review of the appraisal report by F. Gerald Ham, *American Archivist* 45 (Fall 1982): 475–77; James E. O'Neill, "FBI Appraisal," *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 9 (October 1981): 19–20; Athan G. Theoharis, "The National Archives and FBI Records," *Government Publications Review* 10 (1993): 251–55; Susan D. Steinwall, "Appraisal and the FBI Files Case: For Whom Do Archivists Retain Records?" *American Archivist* 49 (Winter 1986): 52–63; John Anthony Scott, "The FBI Files: A Challenge for Historians," American Historical Association *Newsletter* 18 (March 1980): 1–2.
4. *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster,* 485 F. Supp. 222 (D.D.C. 1980).
5. "FBI Field Files: NARS Appraises a Mountain," *SAA Newsletter* (May 1981): 4. For background information on appraisal in the National Archives see these articles by James Gregory Bradsher: "An Administrative History of the Disposal of Federal Records, 1789–1949," *Provenance: Journal of the Society of Georgia Archivists* 3 (Fall 1985): 1–21; "An Administrative History of the Disposal of Federal Records, 1950–1985," *ibid.* 4 (Fall 1986): 49–73; "When One Percent Means a Lot: The Percentage of Permanent Records in the National Archives," Organization of American Historians *Newsletter* 13 (May 1985): 20–21; "Archivists, Historians, and Records Disposition," *The Federalist: Newsletter of the Society for History in the Federal Government* 2 (Spring 1981): 5–6, 8.
6. Among the plaintiffs were the American Friends Service Committee, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, American Indian Movement, Victor Navasky, Paul Robeson, Jr., Morton Sobell, Robert and Michael Meeropol, William Appleman Williams, Angela Davis, Frank J. Donner, and Harry Bridges.
7. For background on the case see Steinwall, "Appraisal and the FBI Files Case," 52–63; Scott, "The FBI Files," 1–2; Opinion, 30 September 1983, *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (U.S. Court of Appeals for District of Columbia Circuit), 1–96.
8. Opinion, 10 January 1980, *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (D.D.C.), 8; Order, 10 January 1980, *ibid.,* 1; "Court Rules in FBI Case," *SAA Newsletter* (March 1980): 4; Kenneth Bredemeier, "Judge Blocks FBI From Destroying 30 Years of Documents in Archives," *The Washington Post,* 11 January 1980, A13.
9. W. L. Bailey to Mr. Boynton, 20 March 1980, FBI File 66-3286-1346.
10. For the difficulties Congress and the General Accounting Office had during the mid-1970s to gain access to the FBI records, see *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives on FBI Oversight, Preliminary and Final Report by the GAO on FBI Domestic Intelligence Operations,* 94th Cong., 1st and 2nd sess., 24 September 1975 and 24 February 1976, 240–48.
11. James B. Rhoads, letter to James Gregory Bradsher, 1 July 1986, copy of letter in possession of author; Opinion, 10 January 1980, *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (D.D.C.), 910.
12. William L. Bailey to T. W. Wadlow, 9 April 1980, FBI File 66-19087-159; Affidavit, Robert W. Scherrer, 23 March 1981, *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (D.D.C.), 2–4.
13. James E. O'Neill to William L. Bailey, 23 June 1980, FBI File 66-19087-160; "FBI Field Files: NARS Appraises a Mountain," *SAA Newsletter* (May 1981): 4.
14. Many people believed the only reason the FBI wanted to get rid of records was so it would not have to respond to Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act requests. Scott, "The FBI Files," 1–2; testimony by Harold Fruchtbaum, 16 July 1981, before the House Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights and reprinted in "Historians Defend FOIA," Organization of American Historians *Newsletter* 9 (October 1981): 3, 13–14. Although believing this may have played some part in the FBI's records disposition program, Judge Greene did not accept this belief as a compelling argument for retaining all records. Opinion, 10 January 1980, *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (D.D.C.), 18.
15. "FBI Field Files," 4.

16. Interview with Robert M. Warner, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 5 August 1986.
17. R. W. Scherrer to Mr. Finzel, 10 February 1981, FBI File 66-19249-2.
18. This team, led by Charles Dollar, consisted of Bruce Ambacher, Sharon Gibbs, Henry Wolfinger, Trudy Peterson, and Susan Falb.
19. For general information about the FBI, see Steven A. Stinson, "The Federal Bureau of Investigation: Its History, Organization, Functions and Publications," *Government Publications Review* 6 (1979): 213–39; Sanford J. Ungar, *FBI* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1976).
20. Two types of entries are prepared for the general index. "Main cards" are prepared for individuals, organizations, and general subjects that are the primary focus of an investigation, while cross reference or "see" cards are prepared for secondary subjects. For more information on the general and special indexes see Ann Mari Buitrago and Leon Andrew Immerman, *Are You Now or Have You Ever Been in the FBI Files?: How to Secure and Interpret Your FBI Files* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1981): 11–13; National Archives and Records Service, "Appraisal of the Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation: A Report to Hon. Harold H. Greene, United States District Court for the District of Columbia, submitted by the National Archives and Records Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, November 9, 1981, Amended, January 8, 1982," vol. 2, Appendix A. Hereafter cited as NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report." The FBI, beginning in 1921, also prepared abstracts or summaries of individual documents. Each abstract was made in duplicate on 3" x 5" slips. One set was arranged alphabetically by the source or originator of the document (field office, federal agency, or private individual), while a second set was arranged by file number. A third set of abstract slips was prepared for foreign material relating to the Bureau's Special Intelligence Program (SIS) during the 1940–48 period. Adoption of the Automation of Incoming Mail Serialization (AIMS) system in 1976 eliminated the need for abstracting, although the practice was not stopped completely until 1979. *Ibid.*, vol. 1. p. 2-2.
21. Legats generally maintain case files on hand for a year before they are forwarded to headquarters for safekeeping and eventual disposition. Ungar, *FBI*, 239.
22. Classification of investigations is idiosyncratic, in both the field office and headquarters, so that the same cases may be in different classifications in the field office and headquarters. For discussions on the FBI filing systems see NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 1, pp. 2-1 to 2-9; Buitrago and Immerman, 1–32.
23. For information on file contents see Buitrago and Immerman, *Are You Now or Have You Ever Been in the FBI Files?* 103–58.
24. Michael Stephen Hindus, Theodore M. Hammett, and Barbara M. Hobson, *The Files of the Massachusetts Superior Court, 1859–1959: An Analysis and A Plan for Action; A Report of the Massachusetts Judicial Records Committee of the Supreme Court, Boston, 1979* (Boston: G.K. Hall and Company, 1980). Hereafter cited as Hindus, *Report.*
25. For more detailed information about the methodology employed, see NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 1: pp. 3-1, 3-4 to 3-8.
26. Charles Dollar served as task force deputy. The other task force members were Bruce Ambacher, Ed Barresse, Greg Bradsher, George Chalou, Gerry Haines, Sue Falb, Sharon Gibbs, Mike Goldman, Don Harrison, Edie Hedlin, Mike McReynolds, Jerry Nashorn, Tim Nenninger, Trudy Peterson, and Henry Wolfinger.
27. Dudney and Glock started their FBI careers in records management in 1954 and 1951 respectively. Scherrer began his career with the Bureau in 1953 as a file clerk. After obtaining a law degree he became a special agent. In 1980 he assumed his records management position.
28. *The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr: From 'Solo' to Memphis* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981): 10.
29. Anthony Marro, "FBI Break-in Policy," in Athan G. Theoharis, ed., *Beyond the Hiss Case: The FBI, Congress, and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982): 84.
30. *Ibid.*, 84.
31. Abbreviations discussed in Buitrago and Immerman, *Are You Now or Have You Ever Been in the FBI Files?* 159–215.
32. For discussions of FBI euphemisms, see James Gregory Bradsher, "Researchers, Archivists, and the Access Challenge of the FBI Records in the National Archives," *Midwestern Archivist* 11 (1986): 103–4.
33. For information about the legal rights problems see NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 1, pp. 3-2 to 3-3.

34. While the front page of the sheet was the same for all cases, the back page was designed in four versions to accommodate the different types of FBI cases in the central records system: administrative, applicant, criminal, and security.
35. NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 1, p. 3-8.
36. There is a real myth about the activities of the FBI. Although some of its work is of the "glamorous" nature, much of it involves investigations of routine crimes, e.g., stolen cars, theft of government property, and false entries in records of interstate carriers. For an interesting account explaining how the myth was developed and nurtured, see Richard Gid Powers, *G-Men: Hoover's FBI in American Popular Culture* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983).
37. NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report" vol. 1, p. 4-21. Table 4-11.
38. NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report" vol. 1, p. 3-7.
39. Although there were at least twenty-five million FBI case files created, including over eighteen million in the field offices, there were probably fewer than twelve million case files existing in 1981. It would appear, based on the data contained in volume 2 of the "FBI Appraisal Report," that at least half and possibly as many as 75 percent of the field files had been destroyed. A five million figure, cited in the May 1981 *SAA Newsletter,* is probably very close to the number of field files existing at that time; "FBI Field Files," 4. For a brief discussion of the FBI's records disposition program before 1981 see NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report" vol. 1, pp. 2-7 to 2-9.
40. These two classifications were established in 1921 as repositories for miscellaneous administrative files. The documentation is voluminous and varied, and thus the classifications are very heterogeneous in topics and significance.
41. The FBI establishes control files as another means of maintaining control of information and activities on specific subjects. They usually are set up in connection with various investigative activities such as gambling investigations, organized crime programs, political organizations under investigation, protection of the President, and any other topic needing control between the individual case files. Such control files often contain lists of other files, names of organizations, and correspondence files on a specific case that has drawn public attention.
42. There are about five hundred resident agencies. They do not normally maintain case files, but only serials relating to current cases.
43. NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 1, pp. 4-6; 4-17, Table 4-6.
44. Hindus, *Report,* 62, 70–71, 80–81; NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 1, pp. 3-9, 4-7.
45. NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 1, pp. 4-7, 4-21.
46. Fourteen staff members voted on each appraisal recommendation. O'Neill and Dollar did not participate in the voting, and one task force member left the project before the voting began.
47. In twenty-nine of the fifty-one classifications there were fewer than 1,000 case files. In sixteen there were between 1,000 and 10,000 case files, and in six, there were more than 10,000 case files.
48. In most instances when multi-sectioned cases were recommended for retention, the number of sections was defined as two sections (folders). In several instances, however, such as classifications 26 (Interstate Transportation of Stolen Motor Vehicles) and 91 (Bank Robbery), it took four or more sections to make a headquarters case permanent. With respect to the number of serials it took to make a headquarters case permanent, the range is between six and thirty. Some examples are six in classification 65 (Espionage); eight in classification 175 (Assaulting the President); and twenty in classification 200 (Foreign counterintelligence- [rest of series title classified]).
49. For a discussion of the evidential and informational samples see NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 1, pp. 4-8 to 4-9, 5-1.
50. National Archives and Records Administration, "Final Plan for the Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, July 1, 1986," pp. 297–300.
51. Initially the task force prepared a list of forty-five criteria to capture "unnamed exceptional cases." That list was reduced to criteria that were quite specific, ones that an FBI employee could implement without exercising judgment. The court had criticized the criteria the National Archives had developed in 1977 for permanent retention as "excessively and unnecessarily vague." *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster,* 495 F. Supp. 231 (D.D.C. 1980). Subsequently, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled that although there were some problems with the 1977 FBI headquarters schedule, "we do not find the schedule's criteria to be so vague as to be 'arbitrary and capricious.' The criteria provide sensible guidance to agency personnel who are supposed to be sensitive to archival and historical values." Opinion, 30 September 1983, *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (D.C. Cir.), 75.

52. The other specific criteria included: Bureau specials, major cases, Bureau-identified test cases and field office designated historical files; all control files other than 0 files; code name or code word captioned cases; all cases retained in whole in the headquarters special file room; all cases in headquarters that have one or more files of clippings; the main file of the ten most wanted criminals; subjects (principals) of FBI electronic surveillance as identified in ELSUR index; all files in headquarters containing twenty or more sections; in the "office of origin," all files containing thirty-five or more sections and their headquarters correlates; and in auxiliary offices, all files containing fifty or more sections and their correlates in the "office of origin" and headquarters. NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 1, pp. 5-3 to 5-4.
53. NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 1, p. 3-2; vol. 2, Appendix D.
54. NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 1, p. 4-9. Besides the 300,000 cubic feet of case files, over 200,000 cubic feet of other records were appraised.
55. NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 2, Appendix A. In August, the task force reviewed headquarters personnel, budget, machine-readable, and nontextual records.
56. One group of consultants was taken over to the FBI building and given the opportunity, with the permission of the attorney general, to look at eleven FBI case files. With the exception of security classified material, they saw the same material reviewed by the task force. They also observed how a data collection sheet was filled out and why a case file received the research value rating it did. Files were selected to demonstrate high, medium, low, and no research potential.
57. For a discussion of the role the consultants played in the appraisal see NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 2, Appendix D.
58. In cases involving informants it was decided to postpone making a decision. For a detailed discussion of when FBI records will be accessioned by the National Archives see NARS, "FBI Appraisal Report," vol. 1, p. 5-5.
59. Order, 9 June 1981, *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (D.D.C.), 4. Because of some minor errors, a revised report was submitted to the court on 8 January 1982.
60. "FBI Appraisal Submitted," *SAA Newsletter* (January 1982): 2; F. Gerald Ham, review of the FBI appraisal report, in *American Archivist* 45 (Fall 1982): 476; Athan G. Theoharis, "The National Archives and FBI Records," 255.
61. Robert E. Taylor, "Activist Jurist: Judge Harold Greene Finds Reputation Tied Closely to AT&T Case," *Wall Street Journal,* 8 December 1983, 1, 21; Caroline E. Mayer, "Some Seek Ouster of Phone Industry's 'Reluctant Czar'" *The Washington Post,* 2 December 1984, F3.
62. In 1983, the federal government appealed the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in hopes of having, among other things, the question of standing resolved. A three-judge panel of that court ruled that the plaintiffs had the right to standing and ordered the case back to the U.S. District Court. In doing so, the panel stated that it did not believe the court was "called upon to second-guess NARS' reasoned judgment" but that it could "and should ... review records disposal plans to determine if there is a rational basis for the ... decisions on how to deal with files of such obvious interest." Opinion, 30 September 1983, *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (D.C. Cir.), 26.
63. Judge Harold Greene's Memorandum, 20 December 1985, *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (D.D.C.), 1-4.
64. The court was informed that the National Archives was amending its plan, but it "has not revised or otherwise amended its prior determination that there is no archival basis for these amendments. However, in the interests of bringing this protracted litigation to a close and relieving the FBI of its enormous administrative burden in warehousing records which otherwise should be destroyed pursuant to the plan, defendants have decided not to seek further review of the amendments ordered by the Court." Department of Justice Memorandum in Support of Defendants' Motion for Clarification or, in the Alternative, Modification, 1 July 1986, *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (D.C.C.), 1, n. 1.
65. Order, 8 September 1986, *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (D.D.C.).
66. Leonard Rapport, "In the Valley of Decision: What to do about the Multitude of Files of Quasi Cases," *American Archivist* 48 (Spring 1985): 189.
67. T. R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956): 152.
68. Judge Harold Greene's Memorandum, 8 September 1986, *American Friends Service Committee v. Webster* (D.D.C.), 3.

PUBLICATION REVIEWS

Closing an Era: Historical Perspectives on Modern Archives and Records Management. By Richard J. Cox. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000. 252 pp. Index.

In 1987, John Roberts published an article entitled "Archival Theory: Much Ado About Shelving" [*American Archivist* 1 (1987): 66–74]. The author argued that "archival theory," if it existed at all, was unnecessary and irrelevant to practicing archivists in the trenches. He called for archivists to take pride in their craft and improve their skills as practitioners, rather than concern themselves with applying tenets of "archival theory" to their work.

Being a fan of Roberts's view, I approached Richard Cox's latest book with skepticism and trepidation. The author prefaced his work as "my current best thinking about historical dimensions of the records and the records professions in the late 1990s." I expected to be dragged through endless pages of dry discussions of archival theory by one of its leading proponents. To my surprise and delight, however, I had erred in my preconceptions. *Closing an Era* is an insightful, thought provoking, and refreshingly candid account of the state of records, record-keeping systems, and the records professions (defined as archives and records management by the author) from ancient times to the present.

The book is a compilation of selected essays and papers written by Dr. Cox over the past decade, as well as his new research/writing pertaining to the history of managing records. Organized into nine chapters, the essays trace the history of records and record-keeping systems from the ancient world through the creation of the National Archives and Records Administration. In the later chapters, the author offers his analyses of contemporary topics, including appraisal, the role of memory, archival education, and documentary editing, all with generous portions of archival history sprinkled throughout these discussions.

In the first four chapters, the author leads the reader through a fascinating history of records and record-keeping systems. Cox begins by chiding both archivists and records managers for virtually ignoring their professions' history prior to the 1930s, despite the fact that many of us have backgrounds in history and the humanities. Even the few archival historians that do exist "suffer from a kind of present-mindedness" and fail to study records history in a broader context of record-keeping systems with an interdisciplinary approach.

Cox avoids those pitfalls in the next several chapters of historical archivy. The reader journeys through centuries of records and record keeping, from the Mesopotamians through the Middle Ages and into the American colonial period. Various political, economic, and social historical phenomena influenced the types of records produced and the systems to organize them. For example, mercantilism resulted in the need for more records to track imports/exports and population statistics. Records, and the administration of records, gained greater visibility and importance.

The Industrial Revolution caused a rapid growth in the volume of records and saw the emergence of modern record-keeping systems to handle that "dramatic" growth. Industries produced a variety of records to assist managers in the operation of their businesses. Simultaneously, explosive developments in technology, from the telegraph to the typewriter, drove the emergence of the mechanized (later automated) office, which in turn fueled the rise of archives and records management programs to handle the deluge of records for purposes of evidence, accountability, and institutional memory. These developments continued into the twentieth century, in a variety of manifestations, right up to the present.

Through his historical discourse—which is much broader and richer than the summary given here—Cox delivers the thesis of his work. He argues, successfully, that studying the history of records, record-keeping systems, and our profession will assist us as we seek understanding of and control over modern records, both in traditional formats and in electronic form. Many of the issues debated by today's archivists have roots in earlier times. An in-depth examination of the past, particularly the energized growth of records and systems from the mid-nineteenth century, furnishes excellent background information on how we arrived at the state of the present-day records universe. Once we have that historical perspective, we can begin to offer solutions to the challenges of modern records.

With the strong foundation of historical perspective in place, the author turns his attention in subsequent chapters to consideration of several thorny topics of current interest to our profession. History is always close to the fore as Cox discusses a lack of a national records system, appraisal, archival education, and documentary editing. Part of the reason that the United States lacks a national records system flows from the history of the country. America's fragmented development and deep suspicion of a strong central government have worked against a national records system. Another obstacle has been the splintered past of the records professions, i.e., the tension between archivists and records managers, regional organizations versus the SAA, and theorists versus practitioners. "To the outsider," Cox writes, "the American records professions must seem to be an incomprehensible maze." The seeds of that maze were planted many, many years ago.

Moving on to discuss appraisal (perhaps the most hotly debated issue in archivy), Cox notes that appraisal has its roots in the late nineteenth century, when departments in the executive branch of the federal government had authority to recommend records destruction, subject to Congressional approval. Several subsequent pieces of legislation led to systems of record scheduling. Meanwhile, T. R. Schellenberg postulated his appraisal criteria of primary and secondary values. In the past few decades, other appraisal models followed, such as the "black box" and functional appraisal in the digital era. In particular, tension between evidential and informational values has been going on for a long time, Cox notes, providing continuity with today's debates over appraisal and management of electronic records. His bridge between past and present centers upon *evidence*, as he concludes, "It is the role of archivists to argue for the preservation of evidence necessary for understanding the past." From the pages of history comes a concise answer to one of the most vexing problems faced by archivists.

One of the more interesting chapters in *Closing an Era* examines the World Wide Web's impact on archives, especially in terms of societal memory. Noting that past technologies, such as the telegraph and telephone, impacted personal communication and, therefore, the transmission of memory, Cox analyzes the implications of the Web on the archival mission. While the Web has brought access to information to new heights, it is the *quality* of that information that should concern the profession. Because the Web can separate records from their context, removed from the time and place of their creation, archivists must take pains to communicate the importance of maintaining the integrity of records to mitigate the chances for a blurring, or even a loss, of public memory. The Web should be viewed by archivists as not only a powerful access tool, but also as an opportunity to promote the preservation of records for purposes of evidence and memory.

One might expect a chapter on archival education in a Richard Cox book, and the author does not disappoint. While the reader will find the usual arguments in support of graduate archival programs, Cox adds a fresh twist, promoting archival history as essential to archivists' education. "The study of archival history advances understanding about how archival principles and practices have developed in response to changing record-keeping systems and what the shortcomings of these principles and practices may be in light of modern records characteristics. Studying the history of record-keeping practices provides considerable *practical* information about the nature and characteristics of the documents archivists manage," he argues. Cox asserts that such grounding in historical archivy is possible only in graduate archival programs, a view that may be questionable. Of particular interest in this chapter, however, is Cox's attack on the practicum and its centrality in archival education, past and present. In a no-nonsense tone, he presents a powerful case for balance among classroom instruction, research, and experience.

Cox closes the book with a commentary on the current state of the archival and records management professions, concluding that "stasis," that is, stagnation, characterizes our profession. Although many archives have harnessed the World Wide Web to provide access to holdings, for example, he believes that "an attitude of business as usual" persists, causing those outside the world of archives to continue to hold us in low esteem. His prescription to elevate archives in society's eyes is for records professionals to stress the importance of records in terms of evidence, accountability, and memory. Not surprisingly, this archival educator suggests that transformation of graduate programs to go beyond "training" to include more courses, research requirements, and an interdisciplinary focus would serve as an important catalyst raising archival programs to the higher status they deserve.

The book exhibits some minor problems. The editing could be better—the reader gets the impression that the chapters are merely strung together without much attempt to produce an integrated whole. Similarly, the text becomes redundant and repetitive at times and could be organized more effectively. Stronger proofreading would have caught the occasional gaps in sentences. An account of the history of records outside North America/Western Europe (Asia, perhaps) would be a welcome addition. Finally, the author has a tendency at times to slide into lamentations about his struggles to defend

his perspective among colleagues outside of the academy, distracting the reader and lessening the impact of his significant views.

These flaws aside, *Closing an Era* proved to be a worthy and worthwhile read and a welcome addition to the professional literature. Cox's declaration that archival history has powerful relevance for the understanding of and effectiveness in today's archival world won me over and convinced me that this book has valuable things to say to both practitioners and theorists. Archival theory has existed, does exist, and should be integrated into the daily work of the practitioner. *Closing an Era* enjoys a place my shelf, right next to Roberts's "Much Ado About Shelving." There is indeed room for both.

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American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice. Ed. Randall C. Jimerson. Chicago, 2000. $44.95. 657 pp. Illustrations and index. Paperbound. Available from Society of American Archivists, 527 S. Wells, 5th Floor, Chicago, IL 60607-3922.

In the preface to *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice*, the editor, Randall Jimerson, states that one colleague described the collection of 28 essays that make up the volume as the "greatest hits of the 80s and 90s." At first glance it is tempting to take that simple characterization at face value. The articles, all published between 1983 and 1998, are heavily slanted toward the 1990s, with slightly less than a third published in the 1980s. Viewing it as a "best of collection" fails to address the larger concepts the editor seeks to explore: the nature of American archives and the societal role of archivists.

American Archival Studies brings together numerous important recent writings representing American perspectives. Like many "greatest hits" projects, decisions about what to include are often subjective at best. Unlike *1*, the recently issued album of the Beatles number-one hits, not all of the essays selected topped the charts, leaving the selection criteria less defined. The editor acknowledges the critical and subjective nature of the selection process by indicating that the Society of American Archivists (SAA) Publications Board was unable to reach agreement when presented with a preliminary list of articles. Jimerson explains that this is not an "official" compilation but rather a personal selection informed by wide consultation with colleagues.

The bulk of the essays selected for inclusion were drawn from *American Archivist*, but selections were also culled from *Archival Issues*, *Archivaria*, and one technical report from *Archives and Museum Informatics*. The compilation is presented as an adjunct to the SAA Archival Fundamentals Series, exploring archival concepts and practices beyond what is available in introductory texts. This focus essentially limits the intended audience to practitioners and graduate students. The book is modeled after and intended to supplement two previous collections of archival writings: *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1984) and *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1993). *A Modern Archives Reader* is closest to the model used in *American Archival Studies* in terms of layout and presentation, but conceptually it emulates *Canadian Archival Studies* in striving to highlight a national understanding of archival history and theory. Whereas *A Modern Archives Reader* reproduced the foundational articles of the American archival tradition, this newest anthology offers a vision of where things stand at the end of the twentieth century.

Like *A Modern Archives Reader*, the articles in *American Archival Studies* are grouped under general sections pertaining to aspects of archival theory and practice. In each section, the editor presents a brief summary of the key issues and places the articles in the context of their respective sections. New to this edition are sections on archival history and electronic records. Twenty-eight authors are represented in this volume with some authors appearing more than once or as coauthors. A useful feature is a list of contributors with brief professional profiles of the authors.

American Archival Studies begins with a previously unpublished essay by Jimerson entitled "American Archivists and the Search for Professional Identity." Intended as a context for the articles that follow rather than as a unifying theme for the volume, this opening essay focuses on the tension between theory and practice that has shaped much of the American archival tradition. As Jimerson asserts, the crux of the problem is that "Americans will not easily accept theoretical constructs independent of practical applications" (p. 16). This apparent rejection of intellectualism, he argues, has left archivists struggling for professional identity and public acceptance. How much of this struggle can be ascribed to American pragmatism and self-reliance may be questionable, but it certainly is an interesting notion. Jimerson provides a historical overview of major attempts to promote greater professionalism and public appreciation of archivists through acceptance of standards and guiding principles developed by members of the profession. Education guidelines, certification of individual archivists, and institutional evaluation serve as examples to carve out a professional standing.

The historical analysis undertaken by Jimerson inadvertently highlights one omission among the articles selected for the compilation. He cites in his essay but, as editor, does not include in the volume F. Gerald Ham's influential 1981 article "Archival Strategies for the Post-Custodial Era" (*American Archivist* 44). The absence of that same article from *A Modern Archives Reader* was also noted by a reviewer of that earlier volume. Acceptance of the concept that control does not always equal custody was a fundamental shift in archival thinking, and helped to set the stage for major advances in selection and appraisal theory. Jimerson's essay also continues an ongoing argument currently advanced by Richard Cox and others who have voiced concern over the "relatively unsophisticated level of much of the recent archival literature" and the scarcity of well-conceived research studies (p. 14). In adopting this view, Jimerson laments the demise of the grant-funded Research Fellowship Program for Study of Modern Archives, administered by the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library from 1983 to 1997. The Fellowship Program allowed archivists and others from a variety of settings and institutions to concentrate on advanced research and exploration of archival issues. Almost a quarter of the articles in *American Archival Studies* were a direct result of participation in the Fellowship Program. Clearly, there is a need for similar programs to encourage and stimulate significant research and raise the nature of archival discourse.

The introductory essay provides a logical segue for the first section, "Understanding Archives and Archivists." Authors in this section are John Fleckner, Kenneth Foote ("To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory and Culture"), James O'Toole ("The Symbolic Significance of Archives"), and Elisabeth Kaplan and Jeffrey Mifflin writing on visual literacy and archivists. Foote's article is one of the few in this volume written by someone generally outside of the archival profession. The second section, "Archival History," includes Judith Panitch's article on archival lessons of the French Revolution, and Luke Gilliland-Swetland's assessment of the public archives and historical manuscript traditions in the United States. The section ends with J. Frank Cook's look at the development and influence of SAA.

The book shifts to functional areas in the next seven sections. "Selection and Documentation" contains articles by Timothy Ericson ("At the 'rim of creative dissatisfaction': Archivists and Acquisition Development"), and Helen Samuels and Richard Cox

("The Documentation Strategy and Archival Appraisal Principles: A Different Perspective"). Read together, these articles chronicle the evolution of acquisition theory over the last two decades. The closely related chapter on "Appraisal" includes O'Toole's second contribution ("On the Idea of Uniqueness"). Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young offer an appraisal model for university administrative records ("Exploring the Black Box"). Mark Greene concludes the section with an analysis of the role of research in appraisal.

The fifth section, "Arrangement and Description," illustrates the impact automation has had on the profession. Featured here are David Bearman and Richard Lytle ("The Power and Principle of Provenance"), Avra Michelson ("Description and Reference in the Age of Automation"), Margaret Hedstrom on descriptive practices for electronic records, and Daniel Pitti's overview of Encoded Archival Description. The next functional area, "Reference and Use of Archives," includes Elsie Freeman Finch's article on the user's perspective, Paul Conway's suggested approach to studying archival users, and a focus on administrative users by Elizabeth Yakel and Laura Bost Hensey.

"Preservation" emphasizes the theory-versus-practice issues as James O'Toole's third appearance, a conceptual article ("On the Idea of Permanence"), is juxtaposed with Paul Conway's nationwide study of preservation practices, along with Christopher Ann Paton's straightforward take on audio preservation. "Electronic Records" may have been the most difficult section in terms of deciding what to select. Authors and articles in this section include David Bearman and Margaret Hedstrom ("Reinventing Archives for Electronic Records"), Linda J. Henry ("Schellenberg in Cyberspace"), and Anne Gilliland-Swetland ("Digital Communications: Documentary Opportunities Not to Be Missed.") From this evolving field the volume moves to the ninth and final section on "Management" with articles by Jimerson ("Redefining Archival Identity") and John Grabowski ("Keepers, Users, and Funders: Building an Awareness of Archival Value").

In an undertaking such as this, questions surrounding omissions and placement of the articles are inevitable. On the whole, the selections and organization are sound. For practicing archivists and students of archives it is a useful one-volume distillation, although the majority of that likely audience should have potential access to most of the original articles. That the articles come from a variety of sources and are well-indexed make a compelling case for acquiring this work. Where this volume succeeds most admirably is in breathing new life into some earlier and occasionally overlooked articles while highlighting prominent recent writings. Taken together, the articles in this volume define the American perspective and show an appreciation for the continuing development of the American archival profession.

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